

*Transforming
Suffering into
the Ultimate
Healing*

**From sadness to happiness
till blissfulness**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement page

The Front Gate

Life is Indebted to Sufferings

Chapter

ONE

Sufferings: The Signs of Soul's Evolution

Chapter

TWO

**The Kind of Happiness Everyone is
Looking For**

Chapter

THREE

**Opening the Gate of Tranquility,
Entering the Ultimate Healing**

Chapter

FOUR

Contemplative Materials

- Planet that Beautify the Soul
- As Determined as Gandhi, as Touching as Rumi
 - Religion of Love
- Expelling Darkness with a Broom
 - The Light of Bali

Chapter

FIVE

Glimpses on the Ultimate Healing (Enlightenment)

- Blasting the Attachments,
Harvesting the Beauty
- Unfolding the Beauty of Suffering
 - Silent Illumination
- Messages of Beauty in Borobudur
- The Rising Sun of Enlightenment

The Back Gate

Transforming Suffering into the Ultimate Healing

Attachment 1

Meditation on the Ultimate Healing

Attachment 2
Meditation on Light

Attachment 3
Meditation on Enlightenment

References

*To all souls prepared
to be strengthened by
woes and make their
way beyond the gate of
the ultimate healing*



The Front Gate
Life is Indebted to Sufferings



Life is Indebted to Sufferings



Welcome to the lodge of contemplation. A mansion of sufferings where one shall experience the lamentation and grief for the countless melancholies in life. Nevertheless, as this small and modest book will briefly explore, the woes discussed here is not the common ones as they are the kind of misery that might be developed into substances for a soul's evolution. They are sufferings granting opportunities to compensate karmic debts, acting as splendid meditation materials, escorting souls into the realm of wisdom, and enlightening the path in discovering the ultimate healing.

Moreover, it is also this kind of suffering that will provide solid foundation to the forthcoming happiness. In the concluding contemplation of this book, upon surpassing both wretchedness and happiness and as well unlocking the door of serenity, it is the stillness too that shall open the gate of the ultimate

healing! With this perspective, isn't life indebted to sufferings?

Experiencing tragedies is indeed a hard scene to be acted in this stage of life, especially when the calamities are immensely grave as the lost of the beloved ones, turned into a handicap, and constant sickness. Hereby this book would like to convey its deepest empathy to all souls those are being visited by pain and sorrow. Nothing is more useful for them than a prayer; a profound wish for their healing and lifting of grief so they might gain merriment in their labors of life. And it is within the restored daily life itself that a mortal may gaze in wonder the gradually opening gate of the ultimate healing.

This book is presented upon the intention to enhance the liveliness and the meaningfulness of the final wish above. Naturally, it is incapable to reach all of the lamenting souls (our friends those are within suffering) and, on the other hand, not all readers might cope with the simple messages this book carries. However, no matter what the limitation is, please allow the kind purpose of this book to accomplish its task. May all be happy and reveal the ultimate healing!

Padang Asah, Desa Tajun, Northern Bali
March 2 2008

Gede Prama

*** Note: The concept of the ultimate healing in this book is the same with the one that is termed as “enlightenment” in the eastern philosophies. Any soul experience the enlightenment shall be healed and perfectly liberated.**

Chapter
ONE
Sufferings:
The Signs of a Soul's Evolution



Sufferings: The Signs of a Soul's Evolution



Suffering, sorrow, and misery seem to be the image of life in many parts of the world. Peace only made a temporary visit at the end of the strained cold war between two powerful countries over decades. The harmony was suddenly shattered by the terrorists' wailing bomb that ruined the World Trade Center and indicated the beginning of a long suffering followed by sorrowful stories in Afghanistan and Iraq. Tranquility also stayed for only a brief moment in Middle East after its mourning for the late peace activist Jasser Arafat, resulted to another conflict involving machine guns and brutal violence. India and Pakistan have tried to sit together deciding strategies to create peace, still the killing devices refuse to cease creating misery in the lands that had borne a number of major religions. In Latin America, some outstanding world-peace makers (Paolo Coelho, to name one of them) have born, yet this does not put an end to the work of the suffering machines in the region.

Nobel Prizes for the world peace has been granted yearly to the world's famous people whose qualifications are beyond doubt, nevertheless peace is still a precious and luxurious commodity in this century.

Every year, many countries in Asia, Europe, America, Australia, and mostly Africa take turn to face horrible disasters. Almost at the same time, the last Tsunami in Aceh (Indonesia) devastated Thailand and Malaysia in a flash. It seems that the nature never give up to strike, from Africa to America, Asia to Australia, by earthquakes, tsunami, volcano eruptions, floods, land slide, terrorists' bombing, and hot-mud. Not a single religion which devotees are not included in the list of disaster victims. As if that nature is indiscriminately bestowing a suffering gift upon all human races and religions.

In no time, the grey silhouette of misery has become the main color of the news, started by The United States' invasion to Iraq and Afghanistan, the contemporary threats of the terrorist and the new versions of horrible natural disasters. It is easily understandable

*All of the strong and determined lives
are made so upon mountains of
suffering*



that numerous people contemplate their sins. Several dignitaries speculate that God is in fury, whereas some others relate this matter to the dark aura of the leaders or explain the matter as the blast of the past indulgences accumulation. Some people with greater valor claim that religions have lost their potencies.')

In this matter, it is certain that any speculation of thought has to be appreciated without any judgment, apart from its being right, wrong, virtuous, or impious.

With great appreciation on the point-of-view diversities, may this simple and modest book perceive the subject with different perspective. This book does not merely seek to be different, for it was made because there are several aspects of human life seldom be revealed and therefore tend to be forgotten. This book, humble in its way, offers its service as a remembrance to those virtues.

Vitamin for the Soul

*) *This opinion is absorbed from media and conversation in society hence does not represent the author's aspirations, those are going to be discussed briefly in this chapter.*

Given consent to speak openly, it is nearly impossible to find a tough and steady life that had not passed through many prior suffering moments. On the contrary, most of such lives are formed through surviving myriad of sufferings. In this respect, please allow the following names to share some inspirations:

Pema Chodron is among a few women whose success was reached by passing through moments of despair. She did not only find peace for herself, but also become an outstanding guru teaching about serenity. In her wonderful work entitled "*When Things Fall Apart*", she verbalized her gloomy past and shattered marriage. In the beginning of her difficult times, there were only anguish and hatred present, and those were also the ones brought her to meditation centers. If only the separation did not cause her severe heart breaking pain and hatred then she might never know meditation and there would never be a remarkable peace guru named Pema Chodron who produced wonderful, touching, calming and inspiring works.

"*The Road Less Traveled*" is an influential volume written by M. Scott Peck a senior

psychiatrist with decades of experience. In this book the doctor described many things he encountered during his labor healing numerous human souls suffered from mental illness such as stress, depression, insomnia and even schizophrenia. An interesting matter here is the psychiatrist's substantiate conclusion that human souls experience too small amount of suffering in their youth tend to be unstable and easily disturbed in their elderly years.

As if to support the thesis in "*The Road Less Traveled*", Dave Pelzer produced a touching book entitled "*A Child Called It*". Even from the title, there is a sense of stirring statement signifying a child who was addressed and treated as an animal. The writer described how life (in some extents through the child's mother), treated the boy in so painful and miserable ways as the divorced parents, poverty, sorrow, and especially his mentally disturbed mother. It was this latest shortcoming that made the diligent child harmed, tortured, and even stabbed in his stomach with a kitchen knife. It was only through the Social Department's help that the child was then saved and had a chance to grow up. In fact, he did more than growing up

Rumi's sorrow on losing both his books and his master was beyond thinking. Nevertheless, the beauty of misery is that it frequently turns out to be a wonderful opening door



for he is now a life counselor for a lot of people.

A Sufism poet whose works astonish many western people is Jallaludin Rumi. It is common for a Sufism sage to be admired by easterners, yet if one is adored by people in the west as well it means that he or she must have qualities to be counted on. As written by Annemarie Schimmel, in a dark corner of Rumi's life, he was once bumped into great sorrow for he was unable to find his true master. Nevertheless, an extraordinary soul as he did not easily break down. Guided by misery, Rumi kept on seeking until he finally found a master whom he honored. However, upon being asked to be Rumi's guidance, the master requested a nonnegotiable requirement to immediately burn down all of Rumi's books. How confused and desperate Rumi was for what kind of teacher demanded his or her student to destroy books? However, convinced that he has found the right person to whom he was going to learn from, Rumi obeyed the command. And, alas! In the very day he did so, the master vanished into nowhere, leaving Rumi in a great sorrow of losing both his master and his books at the same time.

However, the beauty of misery is that it frequently turns out to be a wonderful opening door. Every wanderer who outstandingly claims a journey into him or herself will therefore understand the origin of the wonder in Rumi's works.

Another exceptional poet is Kahlil Gibran with his masterpiece, *The Prophet*, which is so remarkable that it is almost beyond compare with other texts in the twentieth century. *The Prophet* tells about love, children, sorrow, happiness, and most of life's aspects. It seems that there is no wasted/useless word in this work. Even more than just useful and valuable, it escorts the readers' soul to step into an unimaginable site where dwells the excellent peacefulness. It is important to notice that Kahlil Gibran was a Lebanese refugee who ventured his fortune to live in America. Poverty and misery were his life's daily menus that he eagerly consumed for years.

Mahatma Gandhi is one among the peace icons in the twentieth century. Becoming one of the key successes in Indian liberation, he was also the world's source of inspiration for the *nonviolence movement*. It is unlikely to be

any determined struggle in the nonviolent way which does not inspired by Gandhi's life. Those who once recognized Gandhi's life through literatures, movies, stories, etc. will understand how sky-scraping is the summit of the suffering mountain behind his outstanding life. His experience of being tortured in South Africa, mocked on his first arrival in India, and the severe path of life upon dealing with the British invasion. His physical life was even concluded by a bullet: murdered by a person who hated him. However, as witnessed by the world's history, the more the sand of time fall since the passing away of this great noble man of peace, the more the people's admiration toward him rise.

Still in India, Mother Theresa was another extraordinary lantern of life whose light shines extending the border of her country and religion. The saintly mother illuminated through her outstanding life of service that brightened all hearts. Never did she ask the religion of the lepers in Calcutta as the only thing matter to her is to love and serve all. However, do not assume that the gleam in her lantern of life was spared from hurricanes. She was terrorized, addressed as a stubborn

*Those who once recognized Gandhi's
life through literatures, movies,
stories, etc. will understand how sky-
scraping is the summit of the
suffering mountain behind his
outstanding life. His physical life was
even concluded by a bullet: murdered
by a person who hated him*



dictator, suspected as a missionary, and hurdled by a lot more miseries. Nevertheless, no matter how great the suffering was, she just kept on shining with her simple code: *to love and serve all*.

Jan Goldstein once told about *Sacred Wounds* (those enriched his own life as well) and many other things. Contradict to most people's thought, these sacred wounds unlock numerous doors of meanings and messages that later guided him advancing from one step of life to the higher ones.

Japan and Germany also have stories to tell. In the end of the World War II, both were the vanquished ones. Japan was even more miserable by the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Great number of life perished meaninglessly, not to mention pride and reputation. However, decades after this melancholy both Japan and German are among the world's most distinguished economic forces.

The eight life dramas happened in America, India, Japan, and Germany above illustrate that suffering cannot always be perceived

negatively. Furthermore, it contributes greatly to the development of some strong and unshakeable souls. As well as the biological one, psychological body also needs vitamin as a requirement to evolve. In the cases of the determined beings presented earlier, suffering is a wonderful vitamin for their souls. Contradict to common people's view that sufferings are poisons or termites that devastate life, those unshakable humans perceive suffering as a substance for the evolution of their soul.**)

Sign of Progression

Life indeed has various stories and colors. So great the diversity is that no method might portray life in perfect precision. Every method provides rooms for mistakes and bias. Realizing the particular limitation, this small and modest book does not conclude that every suffering will absolutely raise strength, becomes vitamin for the soul, or originates a soul's development.

**) *Dr. Michael Newton (in Journey of the Souls), through hypnotherapy treatment to depressed people, discovered how some souls grow in their reincarnations. A fundamental thing here is that suffering is one of unavoidable menus for the soul.*

Sometimes suffering leads to strength, but to devastation in other cases. For some persons sorrow becomes vitamin for their soul whereas it poisons others. In certain moments misery unlocks the door of cultivation, while in other occasions it originates destruction. This is life, with its various stories and colors. In turn, this subject leads to one simple question: in what case does suffering serve as a path to the ripening of souls?

As usual, the answer is not as simple as the question. An answer is also followed by chances to be biased by personal experiences, prior knowledge through reading, and analysis. Even so, some contemplative materials are worthy to be cultivated in order to enable misery takes its part as an element for the soul's future evolution.

1. Perception

In any case, life experience is similar to cow dumps. To a farmer craving for the fertility of his soil, it is a fertilizer. To a city dweller who adores clean and sterile life, it is a disgusting source of diseases. From this point we may understand that in this life one does not always

*Suffering contributes greatly to the
development of numerous strong and
unshakeable souls*



perceive what he/she views, for we frequently observe our own perception instead. Moreover, our point of view determines the expression of life that we are going to experience. The similar problem occurs in our identification of suffering. In the kitchen of life, suffering might become a knife that has the capacity to either wounding or assisting. If suffering is viewed as a deadly poison, people's reaction toward it will tend to be of fear, which will be destructive as well. However, if suffering is perceived as a vitamin, fear will vanish (or at least lessen). When suffering comes, it is very beneficial to suppose as if we were consuming vitamin. A flute which body has to be smoothened and bosom get pierced with a sharp knife before capable in providing beautiful melody might also serve as an excellent parable.

We might also recollect the allegory of the golden ring, which is beautiful after being heated, carved, and smoothened. If we face life with these kinds of perception (especially when we are tempted with suffering) then misery has a better chance to be developed into vitamin for the ripening of our soul. In addition, it has been an ancient secret in

psychology that our thoughts or imaginations will also determine the expression (nature) of life that we are going to experience.***)

2. Befriended with self and life

Old English proverb says that “*Bad weather makes good timber*”. Bad weather spares only the qualified and strong trees, mostly with tough root and stem. In its significance toward life, the tough root and stem of life are closely related to our relationship with our own *self* and *life*. As apparently seen in life, those who are in opposition with themselves and their lives are easily shaken by misery. Moreover, they frequently create imaginative agonies that make their journey even harder. This kind of

***) *In human studies, it has been noticed since long time ago a believe that the map determines the territory. It is in contrary to the geographical map in which the form of the area determines the figure of the map. In human life, the map shapes the area. Experience, belief, prior knowledge through reading, point of view, information, etc. are kinds of maps involved in determining the expression of life to be seen. This last forming feature then contributes to the scene of life which is going to be experienced; Viscott's work entitled "Finding Your Strength in Difficult Times, or Gyatso's 'Transforming problems into the path' are an examples of how point of view might greatly help transforming suffering from poison into the life's vitamin.*

people always has something to be complained such as hair loss, unhappy feelings with certain parts of their body (“My skin is too dark...”, “My nose should be more pointed...”), insufficient love from parents, problematic boss, unfair government, and the worst is the unfairness of God. This kind of people might easily be conquered by slight sufferings because of their weak root and stem.

They are so much different compared to those who possess amazing quality of friendship towards themselves and life. *When your mind is no longer clouded by unnecessary thoughts, then every season is the best season*^{****}, is the idea on how this kind of beings often hold their faith. The important point in this matter is the mind that is no longer stained with complaints and shortcomings. In a friend’s words, complaining about self’s shortcomings is like throwing mud to one’s own face. When complaints and shortcomings cease, the mud is subsided, and life unveils a much lovelier feature. Kim Mc Millen and Alison Mc Millen^{****}) once wrote: ‘*When I grew to love all*

^{****}) Kim Mc Millen and Alison Mc Millen: “*When I Love Myself Enough*” (St Martin’s Press, 1996).

In life we do not always perceive what we see, for we frequently observe our own perception instead. Moreover, our point of view determines the expression of life that we are going to experience



of who I am, life started changing in a beautiful and mysterious way. My heart softened and I began to see through very different eyes.' In other words, when we start to love our self as we are, life begins to transform her expression in a means that is both wonderful and mysterious. Something is softening inside, and the person will as well initiate to view life from different point of view. There are plenty of wonderful conclusions in this beautiful work. When we love our self enough, mind does amazing service toward the growth of our soul instead of being destructive. We are no longer haunted by remorse of our past nor worried by the future, and we can hear an inner demand to 'forgive even the most disappointing'. Above of all, the self will never be alone or even feel lonely.

Please notice the writing of Patrick Whiteside in *The Little Book of Happiness* as follow: '*The key to a joyful, untroubled mind is a joyful and untroubled mind*'. In other words, if you want to be filled with joy, lessen filling your life with mud of complaints. Another interpretation of this beautiful phrase is that life is joy, and joy is life. Without any addition nor

accomplishment, life is itself joyful. Greed is the one that later brings the need for making changes and overcome shortcomings, hence invites the darkening clouds into life. Including in these clouds is the likeliness to complain about one's self. Thus, Patrick Whiteside added a simple, short, and yet touching message after the previously mentioned beautiful sentence: *keep it clear... keep it calm... keep it happy.* These are signs of companionship with self and life that starts to be amazing.

3. Focusing on the meaning, feeling grateful to the suffering

In many studies about humanity it is mentioned that since long time ago there has been a quest to find out the points where human beings create. The answers are, of course, various since human's knowledge itself is never in unison. However, a number of seers agree that one's understanding or perception is a crucial point. How things are understood is the key. In the matter of suffering, it becomes a destructive force if the perception is harmful as well. Some examples of destructive perceptions are God's punishment, God's

anger, a sinful life, human's greed, regretless leaders, etc.

The expression of life formed after suffering will be different if it is started with the perception that "There are God's fingerprints in everything". If one focuses to decipher God's fingerprints, find guidance, and then to walk along with the teachings he/she discovered, hence suffering might bring constructive expression. In a Sufi friend's words, *all are sent as guides from the beyond*. Everything, including suffering, is sent as counsel for a meaningful life. Unfortunately, there are too many people drowned too deep in misery and forget the guiding messages brought by the counselor of life called suffering. It often happens that the present suffering is but a key to unlock the gates of bliss and tranquility. As what have been taught through the life of great masters like Milarepa, Walmiki, Ramana Maharshi, Dalai Lama, Buddha, et cetera, it is obviously noticeable that sorrow shares great contribution in the soul's journey to the enlightenment. This is also the cause for some eastern people in their preferring of sorrow to happiness. Not to show off, but because suffering might invite a

*When your mind is no longer
clouded by unnecessary thoughts,
then every season is the best season*



tremendous purification energy for the soul*****), something which happiness is incapable to do so. Thus, upon recognizing our fellows who are capable to identify sufferings in their time of despair as purification steps for their soul, isn't it true that we ought to be grateful to misery?

4. Suffering is a soul-growing element

In the past, only scientists paid attention to energy. However, in the present time energy is frequently discussed in spirituality as well, particularly because its concept greatly facilitates in explaining numerous spiritual journeys. People with limited supply of energy commonly encounter various ailments and, even worse, difficulty in being connected to the higher energy resources. The matter is similar with suffering. Persons with limited energy (particularly when they frequently

*****) *About how suffering purifies soul, deepens the root of happiness, unlocks the gates of tranquility and grants enlightenment, will be elaborated in more detail in both Chapter 2 and 3. As a preliminary note, suffering has greater chance to enlighten in souls experienced long journey and developed. Those are souls capable to recognize the fingerprints of God within every scene of life.*

*There are too many people drowned
too deep in misery and forget the
guiding messages brought by the
counselor of life called suffering*



waste their energy through anger, greed, hatred, envy, despair, and other similar acts) are easy subjects to be disturbed or even destroyed by suffering.

On the other hand, for souls possessing great energy stock (featured by better physical and mental health, good relationship with self and life, wonderful companionship with nature, frequent experience of cosmic association,*****) and especially if they are continuously enhancing their energy through grateful expression) suffering is but an exercise that strengthens.

It is similar to the sunray's heat that blooms Kamboja tree and the heavy rain that greens and fertilizes meadow. For it is the heat of the

*****) *This phrase will be straightforwardly understood by anyone studied, and moreover, practiced the increasing of cosmic intelligence. Words, with their limitation, are unable to explain all of the things happen during the cosmic union. However, a part that might be explained here is that people with numerous experiences of cosmic union are easy to feel the interconnection with elements of nature as plants, animals, stones, and human. It is not a frightening matter for them to dwell in remote places such as forest, sea and desert. They have a feeling of togetherness raised from their understanding that all is one. Sometimes fragile animals, for instance butterfly and bee, perch onto the person's body which they regard as a flower.*

*For it is the heat of the sunray that
makes lotus blossom, it is the heavy
rain that turns meadow green, is
suffering not merely a growing element
that consoles and flourishes the soul?*



sunray that makes Kamboja tree and lotus blossom, the heavy rain that makes meadow green and grants spruce-firs their splendor, is suffering not merely a growing element that consoles and flourishes the soul? Therefore the great General Mc. Arthur had an uncommon prayer for his children in which he implored them to be granted with many troubles, temptations, tremors, and trials. It is particularly because those are instruments that might develop his children's souls into the strong and unshakable ones.

Chapter **TWO**

The Kind of Happiness Everyone is Looking For



The Kind of Happiness Everyone is Looking For



Happiness is the wish of most people in this age. Everybody, from children to adults, desires it. Most of our activities as studying, working, praying, even doing social services, are in pursuit for happiness. In Dalai Lama's words, there is one similarity among us: evading suffering and wanting happiness!

It is obviously depicted here that happiness has become a magnet alluring numerous life. Unfortunately, no matter how intense are we being dragged by the enticement of happiness, most of us are unable to discover it. The crowded mental asylums, the greatly increased stress level, depression that might be found in any place, violence which does not seem to be decreased, higher rate of suicide cases in most parts of the world, human conflicts that could not be solved over centuries, and burning clash between terrorists and governments, show us how rare happiness is.

Another data worth to be mentioned here is the vast development of meditation centers (in the West it is even reported that the growth is more than 100% per year), the widely spreading of books, CDs and VCDs about happiness, and the emerge of plenty remarkable masters that mainly speak about happiness (as Shakti Gawain, James Redfield, Wayne Dyer and Thich Nhat Hanh in the West, as well as Dalai Lama, J. Krishnamurti, Osho, Ramana Maharsi, Nisargadatta Maharaj and Ramakrishna in the East). Altogether, happiness has become both a gigantic magnet and a rare thing.

Moreover, in an era where war and hatred between nations and humans keep on increasing, terrorists with their howling violence machines, and natural disasters that struck here and there, happiness is not only rare but seemed as making further and even further distance. Thus raises an immense query for a lot of people: does God still spare happiness for mortals?

This is indeed an intriguing question which might be followed by numerous speculative ideas and beliefs. By still respecting other

speculative ideas, may this brief and simple book contributes another point of view toward happiness and, at the very least, provides an alternative to be attempted.

The Happiness that comes and goes

The most dominant expression of happiness in this era is as a sought after and purchased commodity. Some acquire happiness through the purchasing of house, car, new clothing, cosmetic, artificial hair, drugs, and even through plastic surgery. Some other seek happiness through position, fame, wealth, money, deposit, and reputation. Furthermore, as have already felt by numerous persons, all kinds of happiness originated from outward and purchased share the same nature: they come and go!

They provide a moment of joy upon arrival and left the seed of sorrow upon departure, causing incalculable tremors in life for it is human's nature to cling to happiness and refuse to be separated from cheerfulness. Hence people encounter agonies when life has to move away from happiness. Observing the rhythm of life in big cities such as New York,

Paris, London and Jakarta we will recognize that everything is moving promptly and hastily. People walk hurriedly, talk rapidly, decide quickly, and of course they will die swiftly as well. What are they pursuing but happiness. Therefore, hounded is their life; like cat chasing its own tail. The faster it runs, the faster its tail lopes.

Along with the demanding pursuit for happiness, the numbers of divorce, child addiction to drugs, crime, corruption and collusion, are increasing. As if presenting a feedback to us all that every kind of happiness rooted outward are corrupted. They are easy to be pulled out and thrown away by the wind of life.

Understanding this reality, in eastern regions (as Japan, Korea and China) bamboo tree becomes the most admired counselor of life*) and there are several reasons for this. First, bamboo is strong because it roots strongly inward into the ground (it differs to modern

*) For readers who are interested to get profound understanding about the bamboo philosophy, a touching and worthy work to be studied is Chao Hsiu Chen's 'The Bamboo Oracle: Confucian Wisdom for Every Day' (Journey Edition, 1998).

*Bamboo, in its quality as a counselor
of life, teaches that in order to gain a
long-lasting happiness one ought to
seek its sources within him/her self*



people's happiness that roots outward). In its quality as a counselor of life, bamboo teaches that in order to gain a long-lasting happiness one ought to seek the inward sources as the quality of companionship with life and the deep gratitude of all the blessings and surrounding people. Secondly, bamboo is among a few plants that is constantly fresh in all seasons though it is not fruitful nor blooms. This is also different from common people those are "fresh" only when their life is abundant and flourish (by possession of wealth, promising career, fame, graduated children, et cetera). Thirdly, upon growing tall bamboo will bow; in contrast to nowadays' life that seeks to get higher and even higher. Life is exhausted by the never ending desires thus it should be balanced by modesty. Most of all, bamboo is empty inside. In the East, emptiness is a symbol of perfection (as in Mandala). The main reason for many people to be easily tempered and irritated is because they are loaded inside with ego and over pride. The meaning of emptiness in this bamboo analogy is to learn perceiving all as already perfect as they are and therefore do not need for further explanation and understanding (empty). Unfortunately, this is the most difficult thing to

*The happiness passed through the
stairs of sufferings tends to root
deeper than the one that did not*



be done in this present time so we can understand that happiness has become a rare commodity because people are so loaded inside (with things as ego, wants, hatred, anger, conflict and competition). Enlightened by this illumination of the bamboo, it is worthy to consider on digging the inner sources of happiness.

Happiness with strong roots inward

As mentioned in the previous chapter, suffering is not related to tears alone for it might as well serve as an opening door to happiness. Managed properly, suffering even has the competence to present the more profound kind of happiness. We could say so because the happiness passed through the stairs of sufferings tends to root deeper than the one without such experience.

It would be even better if the sufferings have been passed through a more positive perspective, sufficient quality of the companionship with self and life, deeper understanding, and awareness that suffering is a substance for the evolution. As exemplified in numerous lives (notice the eight illustrations

*Essentially, life is greatly indebted
to suffering for it is suffering that
grows firm and strong roots to the
forthcoming happiness*



in the beginning of the first chapter), this kind of suffering frequently reveals the expression of happiness deeply rooted inward. It might as well weaken one's ego and improve one's acceptance toward life.

In this way of thinking, happiness actually owes a lot to suffering because it is suffering that gives strong and unshakeable roots to the forthcoming happiness.**) Unfortunately, most souls are unable to reach this stage. Suffering drowns a lot of people into the mud of life (as divorce, hatred, anger, frustration, and heartache), whereas some others are broken by anguish and do things as committing suicide, poisoning themselves, consuming drugs, and so on. Hence raises a fundamental question: in what occasion does suffering be a

**) *Several Masters (one of them is Ribur Rinpoche in 'How to Generate Bodhicitta', Amitabha Buddhist Center, 1999) even prefer suffering to happiness, especially because suffering purifies and provides opportunities to compensate karmic debts. Chogyum Trungpa, a meditation expert, mentioned that suffering presents a lot of materials to be cultivated in meditation ('Meditation in Action', Shambala Library, 1991). It is certainly difficult to imagine a fruitful meditation without any material to be cultivated. In other words, suffering has more meaningful expressions rather than merely a malady feared by common people.*

*The wealthiest person will remain
feeling poor without contentment. The
penniless will remain feeling rich with
contentment*



growing substance for the strong roots of the upcoming merriment?

1. Training self to be contented

A master once revealed that no matter how rich you are, you would remain to feel poor if you never feel enough. On the other hand, no matter how poor you are, you would feel rich if you feel enough. This master's wisdom is really challenging for modern people to embody the material of happiness which is deeply rooted inward: to feel enough! It is of course not a simple challenge especially in an era where most of the life aspects are so wildly driven by desires to always get more and even more. More than yesterday, more than our relatives, neighbors, colleagues, and so on.

Some people might put the blame on the advertising industry, television, immoral examples, and other "outer" reasons. However, it has to be admitted that the triumph in training self to always feel contented is the most fundamental point in this subject. Just as bad weather (an outer reason) might cause sickness if the body's immunity (an inner aspect) is degenerates. The

Suppose a person wishes to develop a body of life with prime immunity that might prevent the outer weather from causing sickness, he/she has to learn keeping distance to all desires that come from both physical and non-physical factors



weather outside could not produce any impact to a body with excellent immunity (in our case; the feeling of contentment).

In this kind of consciousness map we could see that suppose a person wishes to develop a body of life with prime immunity that might prevent the outer weather from causing sickness, he/she has to learn keeping distance to all desires that come from both physical and non-physical factors. The physical desires are more likely to be renounced by those who like fasting, or at least frequently say “enough” to his/her physical wants. Working hard and doing greatest effort to make life more useful are good, but accepting the result with grateful expression is a wonderful inner root of happiness and liberation.***)

The desires of thoughts are easy to be relinquished by wisdom. Mind, as understood by many people, is dreadfully greedy to choose

***) *Shakti Gawain with her ‘Creating the True Life Prosperity’ (New World Library, 1997), is one of the teachers underlining the importance of being contented. In the particular work, she even emphasized that the feeling of contentment straightforwardly bestows us an everlasting prosperity.*

Working hard and doing greatest effort to make life more useful are good, but accepting the result with grateful expression is a wonderful inner root of happiness and liberation



goodness over badness, righteousness over wickedness, and accomplishment over failure. If goodness, righteousness, and accomplishment are followed by happiness therefore their contraries are going to be followed by misery. Thus it is easy to presume that life will then constantly occupied with thirst for goodness, righteousness, and accomplishment.

On the other hand, wisdom is not indicated by the thirst for goodness, righteousness, nor accomplishment. Wisdom is already contented by the way it is. The sun shines in the day-time, the moon and the stars in the night-time, flowers bloom in their season, rain falls on its time, fish swim in the water, dogs run on earth, birds fly in the sky. Everything is just perfect as they are! Whoever arrives at this point will find out that happiness is no longer a rare and hard thing to be achieved.

2. Managing expectation

Expectation is indeed a kind of energy and it is also the one advancing the development of civilization from time to time. However, the truth that expectation is also the mother of

*Wisdom is not indicated by the thirst
for goodness, righteousness, nor
accomplishment. Wisdom is already
contented by the way it is*



disappointment is almost undeniable as well. Expectation causes many people to be consumed by sufferings. We are likely to be disappointed when our actions (as helping others, educating children, working hard, and even praying) are full with expectations.

This certainly does not mean to prevent people from having an expectation. As long as it is managed simply as a source of energy, expectation actually does not have too many harmful impacts. However, it might turn out to be dangerous once it develops into more than that, for expectation will then begin to transform into a very dictating force. It will always demand fulfillment. Hard work must always be followed by success, generosity has to be gratefully compensated in the future, and sending children to school should make them good. This is the beginning of the many disasters in life: expectation that demands to always be fulfilled.

Based on this kind of understanding toward life, many masters then train themselves austerely to place expectation only as a source of energy. Not more than that. They still keep on working, helping people, and praying, but without expectation on the result. Liberating

*The origin of the many disasters in
life is expectation that demands to
always be fulfilled*



self from immense desires on results is the beginning of the happiness which is deeply rooted inward. ****)

3. There is happiness within the journey

A friend once narrated a children story entitled '*Peter and the Thread*'. This Peter boy was happened to possess prosperous karma for most of his wants were granted by his parents and he was loved by his friends and teachers at school. Bored with this kind of easy life, he looked for something different in a forest. There he met a wizard who gave him a time machine that, unfortunately, could only work to bring him into the future.

So it was said that Peter started to do experiment with his life. Getting bored with the present time, he activated the device and

****) *A number of Tantric masters, like Chogyum Trungpa in his discussion about Tantra ('Crazy Wisdom', or 'Journey without goal'), even repetitively mentioned the importance of being totally hopeless; to be completely free from expectation. Please carefully note that the lost of expectation discussed here is not the one caused by frustration, but by the excellent awareness that expectation defiles the journey and obstruct the inner growth. However, this is only suggested for advanced serious Tantric disciples, and not for common people.*

*A seeker shall carry on working,
helping others, and praying. Yet,
liberating self from the immense
desires on the outcomes of deeds is
the origin of the happiness which is
strongly rooted inward*



leaped into his teenage where he met his future wife. His teenage jaded him, he proceeded to his adulthood and became a husband with four children. Getting tired with his adulthood, he reused the machine and now he was an elderly man. At this point, he realized that there were so many things in life that he forgot to be obliged for; the amusing childhood, cheerful adolescent, dating time that is full of love, and the early period of marriage full of adjustments. Suddenly he realized that he failed to love his mother, show gratitude to his father, and even to kiss his wife lovingly, for they were already passed away.

All at once Peter lamented the greed of life to hurriedly advance to the future. He ran to the forest and met the wizard, asked to be returned back to where he was. Peter was reversed as a child once more, now with understanding to live fully in his present time.

To be honest, there are too many people are like Peter; rushing to the future expecting that it has to be better than the present. And there are a lot of elders lament their late recognition

*Too many people are like Peter;
rushing to the future expecting that it
has to be better than the present. It
is not until their old age do they
realize how numerous present times
are wasted without being enjoyed
because of the rushing*



on the numerous present times wasted without being enjoyed because of the rushing.

In other words, actually life should be similar to children taking a trip. They do not know how their destination looks like, yet they are singing along the way. We grown ups are supposed to be like that. We do not know how our old time is going to be, when we are going to depart this life, nor whether our children are going to remember us or not. Nevertheless, do not forget to be happy in this present moment. *****)

Here is the origin of the Eastern sages' different perception on Nirvana, Mokhsa and Heaven. In their point of view, those "realms" do not have any relationship with death. They are here, in this present moment, in life that is free from defilements (like greedy passions,

*****) *Thich Nhat Hanh is one of the masters most seriously teach the importance of living in the present moment. His wonderful works ('Present Moment Wonderful Moment' or 'Peace is every step') beautifully and successfully describes how living in the present moment is not only bringing happiness, but also liberating. In a part of his book, Hanh wrote: 'The best preparation for the future is living the best life in the present', which means to fill the present with life in perfect mindfulness.*

*The best preparation
for the future is living
the best life in the present*



anger, envy, and ignorance). This is also the reason why in English language “today” is termed as *the present*. It is a present given by God to us, and the best way to show our gratitude to God for this gift is by filling it with meaningful things and being grateful for whatever is taking place moment by moment. As have been explained in the previous chapter, we even have to be thankful to suffering and understand that it might also become a wonderful purifying instrument for our soul.

4. Love as a Source of Happiness

A meditation guide once delivered three simple questions to his students: when is the most important time, who is the most important person, and what is the most important thing to be done. Simply and basically, the master then provided the answers: today is the most important time, because it is in this present day that we can do anything for our life. One may want to be happy, sad, helpful for others, or be alone, are all optional. Therefore, many inner travellers believe that we choose to be happy. Happiness

is an option, and the choosing is to be made right now. Not later.

The most important person is anyone around us in this present moment, because it is with him/her/them that we are creating the life. If you want to suffer then fight him/her/them. If you want to be happy, then learn to give him/her/them attention, smile, and aid.

The most important thing to be done is to care about all the people around us in this present moment; to be concerned that we are near him/her/them, to notice that everyone wants to be happy, and to understand that life is not easy. Only through affection to other people and other creations then the roots of life will be incredibly strong. As strong as bamboo tree in the previous discussion. Isn't it caring that makes the roots of happiness in wonderful human beings like Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Taj Mahal, and Saint Franciscus are as such immensely strong as they are?

Bernie Siegel,*****) a medical doctor who has spent a lot of time in hospital curing numerous human's physical bodies, finally surrendered to the fact that *love heals*. It is not only medicine that cures. Love cures as well. Love even offers healing with fewer side effects, and provides stronger basis for the healing. The vital essence in the love that heals is the caring nature to people and other beings. Tulku Thondup in '*The Healing Power of Mind*' presented a series of assuring logic that "*Accepting without blame is the true turning point of healing. It is the healing power of mind*".

This matter explains why people who own pet(s) tend to live longer, and why mothers who love their children have better health. It is also affection that caused a number of people suffering from cancer in the Netherlands gradually recovered upon conducting a number of service duties. Care to others is as well the one that bestows people serving in sacred sites with unlimited energy. And the

*****) Bernie Siegel wrote numerous astonishing works. Some of them those are relevant to this topic are: 1. '*Love, Medicines, and Miracles*', 2. '*Peace, Love, and Healing: the Path to Self Healing*'.

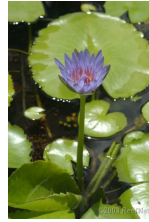
most important thing is that love brings happiness.

Chapter
THREE

**Opening the Gate of
Tranquility,
Entering the Ultimate Healing**



Opening the Gate of Tranquility, Entering the Ultimate Healing



Only a few among people wish to experience suffering. In times, suffering comes though uninvited. However, as what have been discussed about suffering (in Chapter 1) and about happiness (in Chapter 2), suffering is actually more than an inner feeling which is both feared and disliked. Suffering is a sign of an evolving soul. It purifies, grants opportunities to compensate karmic debts, and it is a splendid material for meditation. Above all, suffering is also the one that might provide a very strong root to happiness that grows stronger inward (as bamboo).

In the last part of this small and simple book, it is hoped that the materials about suffering and happiness on the previous discussions might open the gate into tranquility; a realm within life which is beyond words and more likely to be understood through solemn and serene daily practice. It is difficult to be described by

words for words have their limitations in explaining about tranquility, and moreover because words frequently become an obstruction in entering the realm itself. Words bring the concepts and contradictions such as right and wrong, good and bad, success and failure, purity and impurity. And life becomes so frenzied by words.

Different than suffering and happiness those might be easily understood through dialogue, tranquility is easier to be realized through action in daily practice, especially by those who have succeed in passing both suffering and happiness (not over-attached to happiness nor over-burdened by suffering) since they are very likely to gain freedom from attachment and therefore might fly over this life without any burden.

This last attachment (the craving to the expected results, such as the thought that studying, hard working, have to be resulted in wealth, fame, and admiration) frequently blockade people from entering the realm of tranquility. This is the reason for placing the discussion about this subject after the chapters about suffering and happiness. Many youths

inquire on how to heal self from attachment; a question which is more answerable through daily practice, not words.

It is certainly useful to observe others' experience, study the results of the research about human life and learn from the rise and fall of the people around us. However, it has been a character of common people that something happens directly to one's self contains much greater transforming energy.

A friend in serenity once presented a simple but useful analogy that life is similar to cooking rice with a stove. At first, we need big flame, but when the cooking is about to be done we need the small one. Having a lot of curiosities indicates that one's life is still in the "big flame" phase (with a lot of desires, expectations, dreams, and enormous spirit for achievements), yet it is indeed natural and humane. Moreover, every soul starts his/her growth from this point. And there is one advice for all my fellow friends who have just entering this phase: keep on growing!

Nevertheless, in a life journey that has been persecuted a lot by miseries (as disaster,

*Whereas it is relatively easy for the
physical body to feel enough after
having a meal, it is awfully difficult
for a soul dictated by desires and
attachments to feel sufficient and
contented*



divorce, death of the closest persons, poverty, dismissal from job, being mocked, et cetera) and as well has been through the roads of happiness (once being wealthy - though the standard of material abundance is relative, famous, praised, followed, or even contented by the sense of contentment), it is only a matter of time before life will naturally enter the “small fire” stage (where one shall possess the feeling of contentment, and then preparing to open the gate of tranquility). Unfortunately, whereas it is relatively easy for physical body to feel enough after having a meal, it is very hard for a soul dictated by desires and attachments to feel sufficient and contented.

For this reason, a number of serious spiritual travelers are training themselves rigorously to say “enough” to life. In the beginning, they might have to force themselves or be forced by condition to do so. These compulsions are necessary mainly because in the early steps of an inner journey one is still influenced a lot by the past habit factor, long lasting comfort he/she ever experienced and the environmental factors. However, once the sincerity of practice succeeds to conquer the

*In the life of those who have
overcome their fear and doubt like
Rumi, they will realize that we mortals
are living together in the
same mansion with God*



feeling of being forced and the temptations, there the gate of tranquility is wide open before him/her.

A Zen master (as translated and edited by Thomas Cleary) once wrote: “when you are deluded and full of doubt even a thousand books of scripture are still not enough. When you have realized understanding, even one word is already too much ”. It is obvious that fear and doubt are guidance in certain matters, but being continuously obstructed by them is a sign of life which is still in the “big flame” period. It is a little difficult to imagine that life might make entrance into the realm of tranquility if one is still being fooled by fear and doubt.

This might be the reason for a number of masters’ rigorously training themselves to be free from fear and doubt. Rumi, as one among of them who have arrived at this stage, wrote the following stanza in one of his poems:

*Enlightenment is inseparable
from each moment*



For years I have been knocking on Thy door
For so long it is not opened
When it is finally unlocked
I realized
That I knocked it from...
Inside!

In other words, many people are repeatedly knocking on God's door. Nevertheless, those who have overcome fear and doubt like Rumi realize that we are living together in the same dwelling with God. It is hard to imagine any word ever needed by a soul who has arrived to this point. Therefore, it is understandable if Sosan's Hsin Hsin Ming in *'The Book of Nothing: a Song of Enlightenment'* mentioned that: *If there is even an inkling of right or wrong the enlightenment mind ceases to be.* The enlightened mind might be easily faded when the mind is tempted by the dualities of right and wrong. When the concepts of right and wrong are no longer alluring, then nothing remains save the tranquility.

It used to be difficult to understand the reason for numerous sages filling their life only with silence and smile. Apparently, silence and smile are the representatives of tranquility.

*All that is needed is that you
have to become quiet and
silent and go withinward to find your
center. That very center
is the center of existence too.*



They are signs that the curiosity syndrome is already healed, there is nothing left to be sought, and also are feedbacks that doubt and fear are already subsided.

Some youths do call this kind of life as a flat and boring one. This opinion, which signifies a growth which is taking place, also needs to be appreciated. Continue to grow, continue to practice. In relation to this matter, Simpkins and Simpkins in '*Zen in Ter*' stated the simple yet useful essence of practice that: enlightenment is inseparable from each moment. Enlightenment is a life lived wholly and totally from moment to moment.

In a Zen master's words, meditation is to eat when one is hungry, drink when thirsty, and sleep when sleepy. It means that everything done in daily life (having meal, drinking, and even sleeping) are meditations as long as they are conducted in total mindfulness. They become steps into tranquility. Please note Osho's saying in *Zen: the Path of Paradox*' as follows: All that is needed is that you have to become quiet and silent and go withinward to find your center. That very center is the center of existence too. The only thing needed is to

*"I am no more", is how souls in this
stage are filling their daily life
and prayer*



be silent and take a solemn journey inward. It is in this serenity that the center is going to be found, and the deepest core of the center is also the very heart of presence.

The beauty perceived by those ever stepped into this realm is beyond thought. First, dualities of suffering-happiness are passed through and then tranquility is perceived. Apparently, this tranquility is the one that escorts souls in finding their center. And the most wonderful is that the center is also the very heart of existence. Many zen followers refers to this kind of life as *silent illumination*. It is the silence that enlightens. A life which is soundless and wordless, yet filled with illuminating brightness. "I am no more", is how souls in this stage are filling their daily life and prayer. "Thank you, I am sufficient", are words frequently whispered in the prayers of those who ever went this far.

This is similar to what is being called by some fellow friends in the West as cosmic

friendship.‘) People with this kind of achievement never feel lonely even when they are staying in remote places as forest, sea, or desert. It seems as the whole universe is their companion. Sometimes, a butterfly might come and perch the person’s body whereas a bee may touch without stinging, for butterfly and bee suppose the body as a flower. Isn’t it a very lovely thing for a human body to be as beautiful as flower in cosmic sense? In England there is a nursery rhyme that opens the gate into blissfulness with the following beautiful stanzas:

*Thank you for the world so sweet
Thank you for the food we eat
Thank you for the birds can sing
Thank you God for everything*

This is the nature of souls that have entered blissfulness; expressing gratitude to everything (good-bad, success-failure, prosperity-poverty, true-untrue) they encounter in life.

‘) *An outstanding work on cosmic friendship was written by Bucke under the title of ‘Cosmic Consciousness’ (1901). Though this book is an aged one, yet it is still one of the prominent sources in this topic. Other works those are more applicative are ‘Synchronicity: the Inner Path of Leadership’ (Berret-Koehler Publisher, 1998) by Joseph Jaworski and Joseph Murphy’s ‘The Amazing Laws of Cosmic Mind Power’ (Reward Book, 2001).*

Chapter
FOUR
Contemplative Materials



Planet that Beautify the Soul



Following the rapid emerge of disasters (such as tsunami, erupting volcano, terrorist bomb, hot-mud, flood and land slide) along with their countless victims, a lot of people then wonder if God is in fury. A query that, though simple, has become the major quest in many circumstances. And, as usual, there are also two kinds attitude of the answers: positive and negative.

Since the ancient time people in the eastern part of the world have recognized an idea that, suppose God is a dancer, than the universe is His dance. If that was so, does the angry nature reflect the wrath of God? No one knows... Nevertheless the question reminds to a Catholic priest's story of a mother whose candy was stolen by her son. Upon discovering this incident, the mother questioned the boy: "Didn't you see God when you stole my candy?" Innocently, the boy replied, "I did

mommy!” The mother, even angrier with the answer, then delivered a more emotional query: “And what did God say to you at that time?” Being innocent, the boy replied frankly: “He told me that I may take two”.

This story indeed provides rooms for interpretations. Nevertheless, from a certain point of view we might notice that our image of God greatly depends on the purity of our own mind. In the mind of an innocence and honest boy in the story, God has a forgiving and merciful expression. On the other hand, in the emotional and suspicious mind of his mother God’s expression is that of anger and punishment. The matter is the same in the ways people perceive disasters.

Without using the frames of good or bad, right or wrong, pure or impure, and high or low, a lot of teachers taught that every soul has his/her own level of evolution. In all of the levels, every soul has the same task, which is to evolve! It is not suggested for high school pupils to deride those in the elementary class, whereas students in the junior high class are not supposed to feel too inferior to those in the college as well. All are growing. There is no

guarantee that the present high school students might reach the higher level quickly than those who are now still in the elementary class.

With this kind of spirit, please permit this piece of writing to classify the soul's evolution into four steps. The first is the stage for the merchants of life and prayer. This kind of people does business with anyone, especially with God. When their prayer is being granted they think that God is kindhearted. On the contrary, when their demand is not being fulfilled (or even worse, being obstructed by misfortune) then they think that God is furious. Furthermore, they perceive disaster merely as a form of God's anger toward human's deeds. Nevertheless, this is not a fault for it is but a part of the evolution process.

The second kind is the teenage lovers' stage. The nature of the people in this step is that they are highly possessive. There should be no third party, only he/she alone might be close to and loved by God. Love, according to this group, does not have other manifestation than to care, forgive, and liberate. Hence, there should be no other expression for God's love

*Being in love is more beautiful
than being loved. Therefore, rather
than placing disaster as a punishment,
a seer recognizing it as a reminder
on some elements within his/her self
that need to be mended*



than caring, forgiving, and liberating. Once they experience other kind materialization of God's love (moreover the one with miserable nature), then it is easy to presume the direction to which their life is going to ahead: the collision of hatred and longing! This is why some friends those are wounded by tragedy question, "Do Thee still love me God?"

The third is the group of the mature lovers. For them, love is no longer accompanied with hatred. Love is love. It is not in opposition to detestation. Moreover, differ than the previous "teenagers" who perceive being loved as more beautiful than to love, for souls in this level falling in love is more beautiful than being loved. Therefore, rather than placing disaster as a punishment, they are now recognizing it as a reminder on some parts within their selves that need to be mended. In other words, disaster is a vitamin for the soul's evolution.

The fourth group belongs to souls that seek nothing more. Not because of irritation or, moreover, frustration. Absolutely not! They attain this state through the deep sense of contentment, sincerity, gratefulness, and guidance that all are already perfect as they

*Disaster is unknown for those who
seek no more. Whatever things happen
are given the same title: perfect!*



are. Being healthy is perfect, as well as being sick. Is sickness not the one teaches how to be grateful for health? Being success is just as perfect as being failed for what guides us to a summit of life termed as self-knowing save the failure? Life is perfect, and so is death. Is not death the spouse of life that unveils greatly deeper understanding toward the meaning of life? Being rich and being poor are both perfect for poverty is the teaching not to be arrogant and to always be humble instead. Therefore, disaster is unknown for souls in this step. Whatever things happen are given the same title: perfect! Buddhists term this as Nirvana, some of our Moslem and Christian brothers refer to it as *heaven on earth*, and some Hindus mention the state as *maha samadhi*. In Confucius' words: "In meeting a good person, follow him. In meeting a wicked person, examine thy own mind."

Back to the preliminary discussion about disaster and the angry God, the choice of attitude is indeed reflecting the evolution of each individual soul. As have been mentioned earlier, all are evolving. Judging others is merely delaying our own evolution. Referring our self as "better" and judging others as

“inferior” are merely the affairs of ego that poison the future development of our soul.

For whoever has become a mature lover, moreover a soul that seek no more, then the Earth’s expression is no longer a disastrous one. For him/her Earth is a planet that beautifies the soul. Without trial and temptation, isn’t life only looping outside the circle and easily becomes dreary? Isn’t it in trial, temptation, and turmoil, that all souls are being guided inward into the very center of the circle? Isn’t it true that the core of the circle is the only place where the soul might become beautiful and lovely? In an analogy of a girl who becomes hale and hearty in a gymnastic, isn’t it the willingness to undertake a moment of exhaustion by the exercise (willingness to endure a brief moment of tragedy) that makes her even more beautiful? Therein, may the contemplations conclude this section.

As Determined as Gandhi, As Touching as Rumi



Following the burst of violence in a number of western countries (U.S.'s attack to Afghanistan and Iraq, to name one of them) that used to be the worlds' role models in many things, some fellow friends begin to ask on who will become the future role figure in determining the civilization of humanity. A question that is indeed hard to be answered. Quoting a holy scripture, it is easier for the tangled thread to be pulled from the needle's hole than to find figure able to set good examples for civilization in this era.

For the optimists, there is always an open window of opportunity in every era. If the light of the role figure is still unseen then it might because the time has not come yet for the covering cloud to pass. In other words, the light does exist; it is but still unveiled. Analogically, there are two kinds of archer whose target is concealed by the cloud. The first archer waits for the cloud to pass while

the other insists to shoot and takes the risk to miss the target.

Both are having their own advantage and detriment. The first attitude is safer, but when the cloud disappears the target might have already been occupied by other archers' arrows. The second is risky yet it is more likely to be successful compared to the first.

With this kind of risk, some of us then start to predict the future determinants of civilization. Some nominate China for its population and economic development. Some mention India because of its impressive mastery in IT. Some refer to South Africa, particularly for the firm foundation of development built by Nelson Mandela, and you readers may as well add the list with personal opinions.

Whatever the country is, it is hard to be imagined as a role model of civilization without the role of an astonishing leader. Therefore, the exploration of ideas on this subject is going to be focused on the characters of leadership.

In dealing with the present challenges, there is no other word more suitable than “hard”. When even leaders who have performed greatly (as Thaksin in Thailand) were coup d’etated, what will become of those who perform less? Let alone those who govern for a few years, even those who have held the power for decades have to fall.

Therein emerges the importance of perseverance in leadership, and Mahatma Gandhi was one among the leaders possessing great determination. Challenges that he had encountered are countless. From being tortured when he was a lawyer in South Africa, facing the British colonial with both power and weapon in their hands, to being tempted with authority upon the independence of India. Nevertheless, under whatever kind of temptation Gandhi kept on persisting with his two principals: non-violence and integrity not to intermix personal matters with the struggle affairs.

In this century, it is hard to find someone comparable to Gandhi in the matter of non-violence. His physical body tortured and wounded for many times in both South Africa

One of the leaders with outstanding determination ever born was Mahatma Gandhi. Under whatever kind of temptation Gandhi kept on persisting with his two principals: non-violence and integrity not to intermix personal matters with the struggle affairs



and India, Gandhi was still consistent to the creed of non-violence. Before his passing away he even still asked mercy for the one who shot him.

Gandhi's innermost quality in determination not to intermingling personal matters and struggle affairs was revealed during the early days of India's independency. Numerous figures from both Hindu and Moslem parties agreed that Gandhi is the most qualified person to be the first Prime Minister. Nevertheless, as written by the quill of history, Gandhi sheltered the purity of his struggle by letting Nehru been elected as the Prime Minister. Hence, Gandhi was truly a character who knitted the beauty of life with two determinations: non-violence and the purity of struggle.

However, as have been recorded by time, there are too many leaders practicing "blind determination" (determination without guidance/guideless determination). In analogy, those leaders are similar to a boatman who rows vigorously (determinedly) without realizing that he is not the only person in the

*Ascending the divine stairways means
descending the ladders of ego*



boat. Hence, the determination is then associated with repression.

Furthermore, an era frenzied with opinions, struggles, conflicts, and clashes of interests, is no longer the time to persuade people with stick, fist, threat, and especially by killing. No matter how strong one's personality is, how gloomy his/her experiences are, how sentimental he/she toward life is, mortals are still longing for the touches.

The matter is more or less similar to Cleopatra who became the first to conquer Europe. Taj Mahal, a non-Hindu who was not the consort of the king as well, yet she left remarkable memory of being a charm in a kingdom where most of its people were Hindus. Like Mother Theresa who touched the heart of the world. This is then the point where humankind needs a Rumi.

If Gandhi is astounding with his determination, Rumi is with his touches. In most of his works one may sense dignity, charisma, vibration, and touch. There was once a day when Rumi was deep in a profound prayer. Upon finishing his pray, he knocked on the door of The Lover

who Loves Most. A voice behind the door asked: "Who is that?" Serenely Rumi answered: "It is me". Almost instantly, the voice replied: "Please go, for there is no room may contain the two of us in this house." Being rejected, Rumi resumed his insightful prayer. When he felt the sufficiency, he once more knocked at the very door. The same voice was heard: "Who is that?" Rumi, now trembling was he, answered, "It is Thee..." and the door was immediately opened. Anyone who journeys his/her own within will understand how distant Rumi has wandered.

The Door in Rumi's account has been knocked in many ways both during prayer and work. However, for those who are still busy with the word "I" (occupied with ego, arrogance, boast, anger and hatred) the Door remains closed. The Door will naturally open for seekers upon their lost of self.

In the words of the wise: 'When you step up in the path of God means you step down in the path of ego'. Ascending the divine stairways means descending the ladders of ego. And both Gandhi and Rumi's life are full with

inspirations by their stepping down the ladders of their ego.

Hereby, in the end of this discussion let us try to dispose a perspective on what nation will be the future role model of civilization. It is any land borne leaders as determined as Gandhi and as stirring as Rumi, for there the light of civilization may rise to guide those who are still seized by the darkness.

Religion of Love



Paradox. It is the title given to nowadays tendency in life. John Naisbitt is one of the figures greatly contributed to the popularity of the paradox terminology. It is fundamental that, in the mind of people like Naisbitt any tendency that slips out of the common logic will be easily put into the box of paradox. Some people who keep a lot of paradox in their mind are disappointed. Meanwhile, on the contrary, some others were developed by the paradox. In this respect, this writing wishes that most of the readers are going to progress by contemplating the following paradoxes. There is no slightest intention in this writing to turn them into the beginning of another hostility and suspicion.

Some paradoxes worth to be studied are those happened in Bali, India, Tibet and Middle East. Bali, as have been announced years ago by tourism industries, is an island of peace. However, Bali was also the place where

thousands of human, being accused as communists, were slain in 1965.

India is about the same. It is the birth land of two major religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) as well as numerous great and astonishing spiritual figures from Mahatma Gandhi, Ramakrishna, Svami Vivekananda, Osho, Ramana Maharsi, to Buddha Gautama, Atisha, and Acharya Shantidewa. Yet in the very land hatred continuously compelling conflicts, thus our Hindu and Moslem brothers are still unable yet to relinquish their enmity. The argument about the borderline is still getting more intense, and a number of places of worship are still guarded by military forces.

Tibet is the roof of the world, as if it is the head/crown of the Earth. Therefore, it is natural that Tibet borne many remarkable literatures about life (as The Tibetan Book of the Dead). However, in Tibet suffering seems to be everlasting as well. The country is still mourning for the exclusion of its leader, Dalai Lama, which has been happening for decades. Lamentation is reigning the destiny of the Tibetan people, whereas the positive indication of change in the sacred land is yet unseen.

The case is also similar for the Middle East. It is the origin of two world's religions (Islam and Christian), yet killing machines are still howling and taking innocent human beings as their victims. Israel and Palestine have not revealed any sign for an everlasting peace. The conflict is even getting worse lately.

In general, it is understandable that Naisbitt once recognized a globally expanding tendency in which people say "no" to religion but "yes" to spirituality. This is similar to a youth's experience during his/her college years in Melbourne. One day, in a class attended by a lot of students, the lecturer asked: 'Any one of you who have religion?' Only a few raised their hand. However, those who kept their hand on the table never forget to return the pencil they borrowed. They are immediate give help upon seeing female lecturers carrying heavy books. Their discipline is well maintained during lining up in a queue. A smile is always on their face as they greet a friend. They do not have any slightest hesitation to help those in need. In entering an elevator or a train, they always let the elders to come in first.

*The most essential gate connecting
spiritual knowledge and spiritual
achievement is practice*



A question then raised; what is their religion? This query is quite similar to the one delivered to some foreign tourists in Bali. Being asked whether they are Christian, their answer was simply a wordless smile... yet what an excellent courtesy they have! They always knock on the door first before getting into someone's house. When the host forgot to share them a chair, they would ask permission to sit. Their expression of disagreement started with 'Pardon me for my different opinion'. And there are still many more examples of touching courtesies.

This is also the one advancing a number of friends in inner path from spiritual knowledge to spiritual achievement. It is absolutely virtuous to learn Buddhism together with its teaching of compassion. Comprehending Sufism poetries that tell about nothing but love is indeed beneficial. Astonishment aroused by the Saint Fransiscus of Asisi's prayer is certainly a meaningful matter. Falling in love to Bhagavad Gita is obviously a sign of a soul's development, whereas studying Confucius' wisdoms is evidently advantageous as well. However, actualizing them into daily spiritual

*Loving one's spouse and parents,
educating one's children, respecting
one's neighbor and superior,
appreciating different
opinion/attitude and government's
services, being grateful to one's
servants, and, if capable, loving one's
enemy, are amazing daily
spiritual achievements*



development, whereas studying Confucius' wisdoms is evidently advantageous as well. However, actualizing them into daily spiritual achievement undeniably demands even greater efforts.

Numerous masters agree that the most significant gate connecting spiritual knowledge and spiritual achievement is practice. Similar to someone who is in search for balance in cycling, it is only practice that help him/her best. The time and place for the practice are available abundantly. From one's house, working place, school, street, place of worship, to even a football field, all might become places to gain spiritual achievement. In other words, it is as the following beautiful expression of Kahlil Gibran: 'Our daily life is our true temple'.

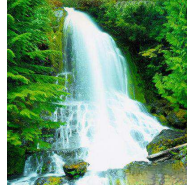
Loving one's spouse and parents, educating one's children, respecting one's neighbor and superior, appreciating different opinion/attitude and government's services, being grateful to one's servants, and, if capable, loving one's enemy, are amazing daily spiritual achievements. Spiritual knowledge

splendorous with words, whereas spiritual achievement ornate with practice.

Amazed by Dalai Lama's spiritual achievement, Richard Gere once asked him about his true religion in daily life. With a genuine smile, Dalai Lama answered: 'My true religion is kindness'.

This is alike to the previous story of those college students in Melbourne that did not raise their hand, yet their daily life is filled with the desire to help others and not to hurt others. In case where an answer is persistently requested, some of them might whisper: '*My religion is love*'.

Expelling Darkness With a Broom



One day Nasrudin put a question before The Almighty, “O God, why did You give me such a beautiful wife?” Calmly, God answered, “Because it was her beauty that made you fall for her”. In the need to inquire more, Nasrudin continued, “She is both beautiful and kind”. “That is why you love her”, was the God’s response. Still feel insufficient, Nasrudin, now with sense of uneasiness, meekly asked, “But, oh God, why is she so unintelligent?” God replied patiently, “That was why she chooses you.”

Please excuse jokes, for jokes are kind of witty seed that bring merriment and laughter into life. Nevertheless, Nasrudin’s attitude in the story above represents the nature of persons wandering their life from a dark zone to the even darker ones. They are always praising other people’s belongings and grumbling on their own possessions, and they constantly

have reasons in making the best gifts life bestows into their hands seem flawed.

Another character of darkness is a daily life which is easily distressed and irritated. Observing the opinions in the media, one may recognize that the more the public get angry, the more important is the news. Study the readers' letters published in the media and be aware that more than half of them are expressions of anger. The issue is the same with the leaders' writings and comments that have less chance on arresting public or media's attention when they are not filled with anger.

In the language of the heart, this indicates that there are still many people who care about the fate of humanity. Some people still have willingness to serve as guardians of history so the past evil is not going to be repeated. Therefore, anger does not always have an awful intention.

In the language of clarity, dissatisfaction, anger and irritation are signs that our emotional state is too easy to be stolen. Even the unimportant matters may trigger the emotion, moreover the significant ones. Therefore, human's life is

generally similar to a huge residence which is daily invaded by a thief. Anger, annoyance, dissatisfaction, and objection are merely some symptoms of the stolen emotions.

A Thief in an Empty Mansion

An ancient logic said that darkness is impossible to be expelled by a broom, for it might only be disposed with light. This raises a curiosity on the kind of light useful in banishing darkness.

If we reconsider the house broke-in analogy, the thief could only do his stealing if the house is both unguarded and filled with things. There are some “matters/items” in our selves that cause the emotion to be easily stolen; those are the over pride, the intelligence that is full of attachment, and the stubborn logics.

Having self-esteem is indeed a sign of development, yet expecting to be highly praised all the time easily makes one’s emotion stolen. Even those with good position (in the government, corporation, etc.) and high

Whereas intelligence is full of measurement and then rejects many of life's expressions, wisdom is more to learn accepting all as they are. This is mainly caused by a profound understanding that perfection has already existed in life right from the beginning up until the end



reputation are unable to make themselves be praised constantly, moreover common people. Therefore, a lot of masters counter self esteem with humble manner. Praise is a source for motivation, whereas being derided is a useful input informing that there are some aspects in our selves that need to be mended.

Intelligence has a unique attitude which is unrecognized by some people. At first, it creates measurement. Then, it evaluates and judges everything according to the measurement. If life goes along with the standard, the measurement will result in pleasure, happiness and agreement. However, since life has far more diverse, complex and deeper expression than any measurement, hence the standardizations based upon intelligence easily cause life to makes disappointment its estuary.

In this case, wisdom might be the balancing element for intelligence. Whereas intelligence is full of measurement and then rejects many of life's expressions, wisdom is more to learn accepting all as they are. This is mainly caused by a profound understanding that perfection has already existed in life right from the

Employee might often get crash of interests with the employer, democracy turns into "demo like crazy", but there is nothing inside the self to be stolen. In Tibet this condition is termed as rigpa (pure presence), which is a brightly illuminated inner state achieved through the long practice of alert mindfulness resulting in a soul's ability to enlighten itself



beginning up until the end. It is desire that violates the perfection with demands and turns happiness into something rare. In the language of wisdom, acceptance is the beginning of liberation.

The stubborn logics, which is a trend in the modern civilization, has other unique natures. As what happens when a stone encounters with its kind, it always get crashed. Government versus legislative, employee versus employer, NGOs versus media... crash, crashes, and even more crashes. One fundamental matter in the stubborn logic is the idea that truth is to be found through opposition. The greater the resistance is, the more credits gained in life.

However, when terrorists with their inflexible view meet the U.S. government that is using the same stubborn logic, they are just looping from one complexity to the others. Nowadays, more people are longing for the “water logics”. Like the Lao Tzu’s idea that, *“The people who cultivate the Way should be more like water”*.

Observe how water flows in the river might pass through obstacles by its flexibility. Compare a dead person's body to the living one, stem of a living tree to the decayed one. In all of the cases, we might distinguish that the living one is more flexible than the deceased. Hereby one could learn that life is closer to flexibility. Moreover, flexibility is more likely to bring happiness.

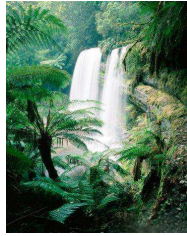
Realizing the crashes generated by the over pride, the intelligence that is filled with attachments, and the inflexible point of view, numerous peace lovers learn to enlighten darkness with silence. No matter how great the pride, intelligence, and stubborn logic are, they will be gone by time. Stillness makes all pass in silence.

Generosity, as well as cruelty, is going to go by. Divinity and impurity, as well as success and failure are also going to over. If this is the orientation of life, then one's soul will start to flow. The soul's dwelling will become that of an empty house, and it is what the thief will find upon the attempt to breaking in. It is harder to be invaded for the mansion is guarded by alertness and awareness.

Moreover, it is empty and therefore the thief will find that there is nothing to be stolen.

Executive might be seldom in agreement with legislative, employee often get crash of interests with the employer, democracy turns into *demo like crazy*, but there is nothing inside the self to be stolen. In Tibet, this condition is termed as *rigpa* (pure presence), which is a brightly illuminated inner state achieved through the long practice of alert mindfulness. Hence, soul will enlighten itself causing all paths of life seem to be pervaded with the illuminating light.

The Light of Bali



On October 12th 2002, for the first time a bomb was exploded in Kuta, Bali, with hundreds of victims. Sad, grief, touched, and concerned are suitable words expressing the feelings of many souls at that moment. As if commanded by an unknown force, a lot of parties from Indonesia and abroad responded to the incident as indication of sympathy and empathy. Funds, efforts, medicines and news were streaming vastly.

However, there was something even more touching. Kuta citizens those were stricken by the uncertainty of their future, put upon a trial of patience, those whose birthplace and hometown was devastated by the bombing and stained with human blood, surprisingly carried out a touching response.

We have witnessed countless pages in the book of time where anger was counteracted with anger, blood compensated with blood, hatred

followed by hatred, and destruction accompanied with nothing than another destruction. Hence, is a moment where human blood responded by calmness, destruction brings friendship instead of animosity, suspicion to other party replaced with empathies to share, not a rare one in humanity? In addition, there was no single place of worship been violated, moreover been destroyed.

It is even more exceptional for, whereas the suspect was Al Qaeda and the incident was happened in a place where majorities are non-Moslems, the particular episode astoundingly established a Hajj Bambang as one of the messengers in conveying Kuta citizens' deepest feelings. It was not only that the fact reported in the media, numerous humanity acknowledgements were as well awarded to Hajj Bambang.

Together with Nyoman Bagiana Karang and other Kuta citizens, Hajj Bambang took action immediately. From transporting human remains, carrying the bleeding ones on their back, saving those who might be saved, to calming their public's emotion. As the result,

though it has been four years since the incident and the court has determined the guilty ones together with their sentence, there is no change in the expression of Kuta. Hatred is not always has to be followed by hatred, destruction does not always has to be accompanied by grudge, human blood does not always has to be compensated by human blood, and Hajj Bambang is still an honored and respected citizen of Kuta.

For whoever owns sensitivity and lets this event to make a dwelling in his/her heart, this occurrence might open doors of contemplation. Most people are very devoted and deeply in love to God that they greet in Mosque, Church, Monastery, Konco, and Pura. Our Moslem friends do their prayer five times a day, our Christian fellows have countless adoring songs for God, our Buddhist acquaintances even prostrate to Buddha statue, and our Hindu comrades have hundreds and even thousands rituals to worship God in Pura.

The question then is: if the devotion to God in places of worship could be that sincere, is

If the devotion to God in the places of worship could be that sincere, is there anyone who conducts similar devotion to the God within one's husband/wife, parents, children, neighbor, superior/inferior, government, other human beings, animals, plants, and other God's expressions/manifestations?



there anyone who conducts similar devotion to the God within one's husband/wife, parents, children, neighbor, superior/inferior, government, other human beings, animals, plants, and other God's expressions/manifestations?

Many religions agree that God is everywhere. In Buddhist language, all possess Buddha nature. All of us might be proud with the great amount of donation to build a house of worship, the high intensity of praying in one's site of worshipping, still the question whispers: 'Is human's devotion to the God they find outside the place of worship is as sincere?'

Quoting Dalai Lama's opinion, God is a boundless compassion/love. In this understanding then Hajj Bambang, Nyoman Bagiana Karang, together with their associates in Bali restoration, have found God (the boundless love) and become living proofs that love is the one may perfectly exorcise hatred, blood spilled by war and fight, anger, and grudge. This is the Light of Bali.

As a comparison, the September 11th terrorist's attack on the World Trade Center has been

*Love is the one may perfectly exorcise
hatred, blood spilled by war and fight,
anger, and grudge. This is
the Light of Bali*



followed by aggressive act upon Afghanistan and Iraq. How many bullets that have been shot, bombs that have been dropped, military aircrafts that have been let loose, warships and tanks that roamed behind grudge and revenge. However, as has been recorded by history, there is not a single indication that the terrorist will stop spreading death and tragedy, as well as there is no clue that U.S. and its allies are satisfied with their grudge and attacks. In particular, human being's fear on the imminent/latent terrorist attack is not subsided.

Bali is not a superpower country; it is only a small island. Bali is frequently accused of pawning culture for tourism. Nevertheless, both of the 12th October 2002 incident and the second bombing in Bali were monuments of life that Bali has provided a comparison about how humanity affairs/problems/conflicts should be solved.

Moreover, it has escorted Hajj Bambang, Nyoman Bagiana Karang and their associates before God. Therefore, upon an issue of what name should be given to the monument of Bali bombing, a friend suggested it to be "The

*Bali has provided a comparison
about how humanity
affairs/problems/conflicts
should be solved*



Monument of the Victory of Dharma” (Dharma: the Law of Nature). Dharma is alike to get wet upon touching water and get burned upon touching fire. Whoever fills his/her life with compassion shall gain happiness. Whoever fills his/her life with anger, sadness shall he/she obtains.

Hajj Bambang was not only saved from the bombing, he was even acknowledged with a number of international awards. More than being regarded as a successful leader of the Institution of the Management of Kuta Citizens, Nyoman Bagiana Karang is now a member of local legislative. We also know that the terrorists caught were given death penalty by the court, as well as we recognize the troubles of U.S. government and its allies.

From all of these stories, Bali bombing indeed took priceless sacrifices. Isn't it a great waste if such event then merely flies by the time and vanishes? Is there any fellow touched to comprehend that the Bali way of resolution is as well the manner of reconciliation for humanity?

Chapter
FIVE
Glimpses on
the Ultimate Healing



Blasting the Attachments, Generating the Beauty



“The truth is awesome”. This might be the dominant nature of interaction between humans in the beginning of the 21st century. Being sure of his/her righteousness, someone might even do a killing. America and its allies felt certain of their righteousness thus they attacked Afghanistan and Iraq, and so were the terrorists with their bombings. India – Pakistan, Palestine – Israel, and North Korea – South Korea are merely several examples on how the sense of righteousness might be followed by hostility.

Hence, the expression of truth in general is fearful. If we care to scrutinize this matter further, we might notice that ideologies, particularly religions, frequently manipulated as the masks of attachments (such as attachments to pride, unfairness, and grudge). And this is the one resulting the fearful life.

Blasting the Attachments

The eastern sages have understood since long time ago that attachments are the origins of moral deficiency. Hence numerous eastern wisdoms claim attachments as one of the targets to be demolished. Among the wisdoms that have great concern in this matter, Zen is one that is going to be briefly exposed here.

Historically, the seed of Zen was originated in India, grew in China, to be flourished in Japan. Some relate Zen to Buddhism whereas some others associate it to nothing. Nevertheless, to whatever it is been associated to, Zen always come up with a single theme, that is to blast attachments. Perhaps because it was flourished in Japan, most of its exploding targets are related to Buddhism.

In fact Zen is more suitable for matured souls. However, because maturity is the one easily slipped into attachments, then the demolishing is needed. In the chronicle of Zen, there were numerous masters attained enlightenment by the following explosive Zen stories.

For souls still required a lot of developments, Zen might bring irritation. Therefore this writing would like to ask an excuse beforehand. Forgiveness is one of the Buddha's virtues, as well as it is also possessed by other divine beings.

The first story is about a Zen monk who was freezing by the cold. His looking for firewood was in vain, he calmly took a wooden Buddha statue and set it into a blaze. Confronted by his angry fellows, the particular monk stated, 'Something that is still inflammable is not a Buddha.'

Not only in Zen, human's daily life in many places show great number of incidents where emotion easily inflamed by religion and other factors. For a number of reasons, some people are immensely attached to their religion thus they are easily "burned" by religion-related matters. In this case, religion is no longer a spring of tranquility for it has been turned into a source of blazing flame. This kind of attachment might be beautifully demolished by the understanding that 'something burnable is nothing but a fake'.

*It is virtuous indeed to consider
religious attributes as sacred.*

*Nevertheless, it is worthy to
contemplate that the clinging to the
concept of divinity might generate
defilements. Moreover, divinity was
not made to bring anger and hostility*



The second story tells about a king who went to meet Boddhidharma. Proudly, the king spoke to Boddhidharma that that he had build a great number of monasteries and he would like to know the amount of merit that he had gain. Without any interest Boddhidharma answered, 'None!'

This is a problem people face nowadays. They do their actions with being attached to the results. Merit is indeed exists for it is a part of the nature's law. However, this kind of attachment makes the doer imprisoned and stained with ego. This is the attachment exploded by Boddhidharma by the principle of 'act, let go, flow'.

In the third Zen story, it is said that there were two Zen monks journeying in the middle of a forest. Suddenly the elder felt the urgent need to urinate and without any conscience he did his business beside a poor Buddha statue that was happened to be there. The junior one was horrified and shout angrily. Without even managed to turn his head the elder asked, 'Oh, then I suppose that you can show me a place where Buddha is not present?' The junior naturally provided a custom remark that

An uncomprehensible thing might mean that whether it is too far beyond the capability of mind, or instead it is too simple to satisfy the complexity of mind. Over-judgment prevents the growth's process, hence it is blasted by the understanding to let such matters unanswered so one may step beyond the gate of liberation



Buddha is presence in every beings. Calmly the elder asked further, 'So... where shall I take a leak then?'

It is virtuous indeed to consider religious attributes as sacred. Nevertheless, it is worthy to contemplate that the clinging to the concept of divinity might generate defilements. Moreover, divinity was not made to bring anger and hostility.

It is even worse when the concept of divinity causes killing for it turns divinity into a horrible thing. This is the kind of attachment blasted by the previous story by the understanding that purity is present because there is impurity. Without impurity, the purity vanishes. It is the unity/totality of both purity and impurity that provides liberation.

The fourth story is one of the most famous ones in its kind. Since long time ago Zen disciples have been asked to explain the sound of a single hand clapping. The riddle remains unanswered for hundreds of years, as if presenting a wisdom that there are some matters that can not be solved by human mind.

An uncomprehensible thing might mean that whether it is too far beyond the capability of mind, or instead it is too simple to satisfy the complexity of mind. Over-judgment prevents the growth's process, hence it is blasted by the understanding to let such matters unanswered so one may step beyond the gate of liberation.

Generating the Beauty

The freedom from attachment possibly is the cause for some Sufi sages' coloring their life with beauty. A Sufism practitioner, Hazrat Hinayat Khan, in *The Heart of Sufism* wrote that 'Indifference and independence are two wings which enable the soul to fly'.

Wayne W. Dyer in *Spiritual Solutions* exposed the immensely beautiful prayer of Santo Franciscus as follow: 'Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace... where there is hatred, let me sow love... where there is sadness, joy'. Life is going to be unimaginably beautiful for those practicing the essence of this prayer.

Disciples in Advaita Vedanta way have been taught since long time ago to focus only on *sat*

cit ananda (truth, awareness/consciousness, and eternal beauty) as the heart of their journey. To be simple, beauty is a result upon discovering truth and practicing awareness. Besides that, beauty is the origin of unity.

Thousand years ago Buddha Gautama has noted to spread the Dhamma that is beautiful in its beginning, beautiful in its middle, and yet beautiful in its ending. Buddhadasa once taught that the very heart of Buddhism is to perceive everything as they are. Furthermore, if everything are already perfect as they are, is life not a beauty?

In the end of this chapter on blasting attachments and generating beauty, it is would be valuable to re-contemplate the horrible expressions of truth and divinity/purity. Zen has already detonated the core of them, that is the attachment. After banishing attachment, sincerity unveils beauty. Thus, souls in this path whisper: 'God is beautiful, that is why He loves beauty'. This is the one frequently referred to as *the religion of beauty*. Hopefully, beauty would not turned into a brand new attachment.

Unfolding the Beauty of Suffering



*Take a look at my blossoming garden,
The flowers, some are white and some are red,
Watered are they everyday by me,
Roses and jasmines, all are beautiful.*

Suffering and more sufferings are the mists of life taking turn in covering the world in recent years. The world has not recovered yet from the cold war when the terrorist suddenly devastated the twin buildings of the World Trade Center, followed by America's attack on Iraq and Afghanistan. Earthquake, tsunami, storm, bomb, war, and conflict destroyed billions of life here and there. It is as if disasters never give up in plaguing mortals' soul. A psychiatrist once quoted an ancient saying of "crazy world" upon witnessing a mother who, strained by life's dilemmas, set fire on herself and her children.

Mourning, lamenting and being stirred by others' grief indisputably are indications of a

soul's evolution. Since early time the eastern sages have been teaching to restrain oneself from causing suffering to other beings, particularly because all of the harms we perform to other creations will reverse and consume our self. It is even instructed not to walk on grass in entering sacred sites. Hence, we have to be immensely grateful that the world still has many people with empathy in their heart.

The Light of Disasters

Still in respect to those whose hearts are filled with empathy, numerous masters agree that there is no path of beauty, moreover divinity, which is perfectly straight and smooth/easy. The more beautiful the destination is, harder are the paths that the wanderer has to go through. With this point of view, the world might be able to be calm for a moment, gathering energy to pass a lot of sloping and winding road ahead.

Within this kind of soul's recess, it might be significant to take a moment of contemplation on the light of disasters. For numerous of souls, disasters are identical to death, separation,

sorrow, and grief. And this is so humane indeed.

Not many souls are willing to dig deeper and find out that there are some secrets of the life's horizons that might be unveiled behind the curtain of disasters. Fear and sadness are useful reflections on the seizing desires. The stronger the grip, the more frightening the appearance of disaster is. When there is a kind of wish that life should only have a peaceful expression and that a family must be happy, then separation will be a punishment and poverty a curse.

Through the poundings of disasters, humans are reminded that the cycle of life has to go on rotating no matter how great the grip of desires is. The sun has to set to welcome the twilight. When the cycle of earth has to be marked by a tremble, then earthquake will be the companion of life. If the time has arrived for death to visit, there he will visit and become the associate of life. Therefore, a father once told his offspring that death come not because of disease, hex, nor disasters. Death's arrival is because the time of the

Not many souls are willing to dig deeper and find out that there are some secrets of the life's horizons that might be unveiled behind the curtain of disasters



appointment has come. Diseases and disasters are merely the opening doors for death.

By this perspective, not only desires will lower their seize, the lights of disasters is going to shine as well. It will be recognized that disasters are more than just sources of grief, melancholy and curse, for they unmask the knowledge on the fuller expression of life.

Similar to the nursery rhyme quoted in the beginning of this section, life is akin to gardening. Though you are planting fine decorative grass, some weeds do grow as well. Even though you have done many good deeds, said a lot of prayers, went to worshipping places frequently, still disasters plague when their time has come. If we grow a hundred meters of decorative grass then the wild weeds only take very small portion of the land. The matter is the same with life. We often forget to be grateful for our years of good health and we frequently grumble for only a few days of sickness.

A garden is made lovely by flowers and colors, and so is life. Happiness is more beautiful after passing through sorrows. Life is so meaningful

*A garden is made lovely by flowers
and colors, and so is life. Happiness
is more beautiful after passing
through sorrows. Life is so meaningful
because of death*



because of death. An achievement rooted with deep gratitude once being shattered by failure.

A garden keeps on growing when it is continuously watered, and so is the soul. It is not only happiness that waters life for sorrow does too, particularly because grief is the educator of humbleness and self-reflection. Peacefulness is not the only one who strengthens life since disasters, once they have passed through successfully, do the same. Peacefulness reinforces soul in the same way with water to wanderers in a desert, whereas disasters bring strength like a hard and rough sand paper that makes a diamond shines. As a note for contemplation, Japan and Germany, two of the world's leading countries in this era, suffered miserable lost decades ago.

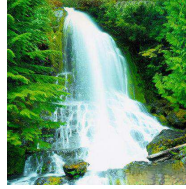
On the summit of all this journeys a beautiful stanza of life remains: "*Roses and jasmynes, all are beautiful*". Roses, together with their thorns, are beautiful as well as the fragrant jasmynes. Whoever may perceive beauty in every element of dualities (happiness – disaster, profit – loss, divinity – impurity, praised – scorned) is but a step from the gate

of enlightenment and his/her soul shall chant,
“All are beautiful!”

In the beautiful language of poets, profit is a lesson from numerous losses, impurity is divinity preparing to reveal its mysteries, and wealth is but the backside of poverty in the coin of life. In the evolving souls, dualities never cease to sway from one extreme to the other. Sorrow visits after happiness, loss after profit, and so on. The nursery rhyme quoted above teaches that, being able to love, nurse, and accept the entire traits of life, something inside will sing, “All are beautiful!”

This might be the one inspired Robert Fulghum to point out that “*Everything we need to know in life are taught in the kindergarten*”. Childhood is when everything seems beautiful. A master, *Dzogchen Chogyal Namkai Norbu* referred to this as *primordial state* (a both starting and concluding point in the inward journey). The nature of this state is simple: nothing positive to accept, nothing negative to reject.

Silent Illumination



Once a disciple asked a master about the human souls' evolution over the last centuries. The particular master was happened to be silent for a moment and then answered as he fixed his eyes on the disciple's, '*It is from darkness to darkness*'. From one dissatisfaction to another discontentment, from one conflict to another clash.

Observing this way in which life flows, some innocent/naïve suburban people questioning the reason of science and technology for bringing such impact. In this matter please spare the naivety. If this is answered by data, numbers and logics, perhaps the symptom of 'from darkness to darkness' will become even longer. Number is opposed to number. Logic is countered to logic.

Hence in this occasion let the question to be answered not by number or logic, but by silence instead. However, please notice that

this does not mean to propose that silence is the only truth. Similar to human's mouth that has hard teeth because their function is to cut and chew food, and also soft and flexible tongue for its task is not to gnaw but to taste. Both have different duty. In this kind of spirit, the silence in this writing asks the permission to speak.

Since the ancient time, not many people fond of silence. Those who dwell in silence are less than those who seek in crowd. And yet both are evolving. People in the crowd do like to grow outward (by other people's amazement and praising as the measurement criterion) whereas the devotees of silence prefer to grow inward. They evade amazement and praise for those are full with ego's temptations.

Gazing the moon with a lamp

One account that is greatly illuminating the path of silence is the life of the holy ascetic Ramana Maharshi. There was not a sign that he was going to be an ascetic until he was in the age of sixteen. Even so, it was happened that he felt a sudden heat in his body upon

*A calm and balance mind is the origin
of beauty*



introduced to the inward journey. Therefore, he ran to the Arunachala hill where not only he got rid of the heat, but he greatly enjoyed the stillness of the site. And then he remained in complete silence for decades.

When finally he ended his silence, Ramana answered a lot of people's answers astoundingly with only a few words. And there an ashram was built by his many of followers around his hermitage. Every time someone asked who his teacher was, he always shook his head and spoke indistinctively that 'The Ultimate consciousness is the only teacher'.

Similarly, in numerous contemplations under different religious titles, disciples are asked to be silence. Initially, the outward dialogue extinguished to be replaced by the inner conversation. Finally, even this inner conversation vanishes and there is nothing left but awareness. Souls those have been enlightened by the illumination of awareness shall whisper that one does not need a lamp to gaze at the moon!

*Whoever practices perfect silence
becomes a Buddha*



Words, logics, and numbers are similar to a lamp that people need upon the time of darkness. One of the Bali spiritualism's founding fathers, Dang Hyang Dwijendra, wrote *kekawin Dharma Sunya* where he mentioned that a calm and balance mind is the origin of beauty. Thereafter, when the source of beauty is already inside do human still need an outer lamp? In Osho's provocative language, it is: 'When you still have someone who can make you happy or sad, you are not a master, you are a slave!'

Appreciation on the silence is not only in Bali. Lama Surya Das (in *Awakening the Buddha Within*) stated that the summit of the journey in finding the right speech is silence. Eckhart Tolle (*Stillness Speaks*) is more or less the same: 'Wisdom comes from the ability to be still. Just look around and listen... let stillness direct your words and actions.' Thomas Merton (*Thoughts in Solitude*) added that: 'My knowledge of myself in silence... opens out into the silence... of God'. J. Krishnamurti (*The Light in Oneself*) suggested that: '*Meditation is absolute silence of the mind*'. Dainin Katagiri (*Returning to Silence*) wrote: '*Shakyamuni is someone who practice tranquil silence*'.

Words and logics are similar to a stick, which is useful for those who have problem with their legs. Nevertheless, it is a burden for people with healthy legs. Moreover, for the souls who are able to fly, stick is indeed a heavy burden

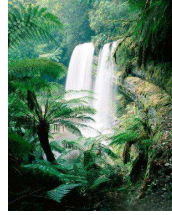


Whoever practices the perfect silence becomes a Buddha. Advanced Zen disciples are fond of conscientious silent illumination practice. Sufism poet, Rumi, greatly developed himself in the silence. One of his poems (from *The Rumi Collections*) spoke: *'When you know your own definition, flee from it, that you may attain to the One who cannot be defined.*

In all of these descriptions one might see that there are numerous human beings illuminated by silence. They are not bordered by traditions. From Sufism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. This kind of people have the same evolution pattern. Logics and words are like coconut's skin and shell those are initially needed by human. However, upon being stripped and opened, the fruit is eaten, the essence is drank, then both the skin and shell are thrown away.

Mikhail Naimy (*The Book of Mirdad*) is more straightforward. He stated that words and logics are similar to stick, which is useful for those who have problem with their legs. Nevertheless, it is burden for people with healthy legs. Moreover, for the souls who are able to fly, stick is indeed a heavy burden.

Messages of Beauty in Borobudur



Borobudur is an unfolded “ancient scripture”. Many people have managed to comprehend it, yet, like the other scriptures, its truth becomes probabilistic upon human mind’s cultivation. Enlightened by this kind of understanding, there is no slightest intention to suggest that there is no other beauty than the substances of this book. Therefore, please permit this writing to serve its probabilistic task.

As if beautifully designed by its creators, the three temples Mendut, Pawon and Borobudur are standing in a straight line. Most all kinds of visitors, both tourists as well as spiritual pilgrims, start their visit from Mendut temple. At the least, they usually pass by the Mendut temple first.

Though relatively small in size, Mendut temple keeps a number of messages. In the outer wall, one might find a relief portraying a turtle

doing hang-gliding by biting the middle point of a piece of wood which is flown by two birds, each biting one end of the wood. Seeing such a rare occasion, some children shouted cheerfully: 'O birds, how wonderful your idea is!' Hastily the turtle intended to declare that the idea is his, not the birds'. However, upon gaping his mouth (and so losing his grip), the turtle fell and died with its body broken into pieces.

Though everyone is free to make interpretation, yet in a sacred journey to Borobudur one is warned right from the very first gate to be careful with ego. Making utterance in the name of ego has such an overwhelming risk.

Gentleness meets Perseverance

Inside of the Mendut temple stand three grand statues: the Lord Buddha in the middle, along with the compassionate Avalokiteshvara (on His right side) and the determined Vajrapani (on His left side). This is as if whispering a message that, upon realizing the threat of ego, one shall discover the Buddhahood in

Borobudur with the two spirits: compassion to others and determination to self.

Kitchen (*pawon*, in Javanese language) is a place to do the cooking. The ingredients are obvious: to be careful in speaking under the name of ego, to do nothing but compassion to others, and to keep nothing for the self but perseverance. These substances are well cultivated in Pawon temple.

The “food” referred to in Pawon temple is different to the ordinary food that is only processed once in a certain place. The cuisine of soul is cultivated every time in every place. Consequently, Zen disciples refer to meditation as having meal upon hunger and sleeping upon sleepiness. In other words, daily life is the meditation itself. Daily life is the when and where we cultivate the ingredients of soul’s cuisine.

Referring to some masters, both when your eyes are closed and opened be a compassionate witness to whatever happened during meditation. Goodness-wickedness, divinity – impurity, accomplishment –

*It is indeed a worthy thing to study
the life of the holy persons, moreover
to embody them into the daily life.
However, being aware that holiness
might as well befall into the root of
defilements is a meditation practice
that purifies and clarifies daily life*



disappointment, all are observed compassionately.

Souls who survived long relentless practice, become compassionate witnesses, and are filling their life with kindness, will sense that Borobudur is more than merely a massive mountain of carved stones.

As a composition of meanings, Borobudur is commonly interpreted as a mountain of life consisting the realm of lustful passion on the base level, the realm of forms in the middle, and the formless realm on its summit. This is surely a point of view that deserves to be appreciated.

Even so, once a soul comprehends the preliminary signs in Mendut and cultivates them in a compassionate and determined life, he/she shall behold an alternative interpretation that Borobudur is a pilgrimage in which a soul is being purified from all kinds of defilement (as greed, hatred and ignorance).

At the base level we can see an exposure of the soul's low desires as the bodily lust. It is true that the upper relief illustrates beautiful

*Any soul succeed in renouncing
defilements will gain protection only
from the virtues within him/her self*



stories of Siddharta Gautama, still the life accounts of the divines might turn into sources of defilement, particularly when they are used to judge life.

When people conclude things like “This master is untrue”, or “That order is deceptive”, then the chronicles of the saints become resources of anger and hostility. It is indeed a good thing to study the life of the holy, moreover to embody them in the daily life. However, being aware that holiness might as well befall into the root of defilements is a meditation practice that purifies and clarifies daily life.

This divinity guarded by awareness is the one which then unlock the gate into the realm of wordless knowledge, alike the upper level of Borobudur which is sufficient without any relief. It is only a perfect cycle, filled with *stupas* containing Buddha statue in the *mudra* (hand gesture) of rolling the Dharma wheel. Without word, devoid of judgment. Only daily life activities perform the excellence of the teaching.

The greatest fortune is gained when generosity makes everything seems good. Upon being virtuous person our selves, for us even the bad persons are going to appear as kind as the good ones



It is then easily understandable when Dr. Rabindranath Tagore (the first non-European Nobel winner), who visited Borobudur on September 23rd 1927 wrote Borobudur-like composition of perfection in Visva Bharati News.

All of Tagore's wonderful lines about Borobudur are concluded with '*let Buddha be my refuge*', which means that any soul succeed in renouncing defilements will gain protection only from the virtues within him/her self.

Notice Tagore's final step in referring to Borobudur as follow: *Man today has no peace, his heart arid with pride, he clamours for an ever-increasing speed in a fury of chase, for objects that ceaselessly run but never reach a meaning, and now is the time when he must come, groping at last to the sacred silence, which stands still in the midst of surging centuries of noise, till he feels assured, that in an immensurable, dwells the final meaning of freedom, whose prayer is: 'Let Buddha be my refuge'.*

The reputation of Tagore's life has provided facts on his personality, perseverance and

compassion. His journey to Borobudur inspires that, for whoever are in command of their ego, sincere in their practice and bring compassion in their deeds, they shall discover a magnificent sanctuary within their selves that is their inner virtue.

Alike Dalai Lama's message: *compassion is the best protection*. Or, in the words of Javanese elders: "The ignorant fails to the knowledgeable whereas the tricky wins over the knowledgeable. The invincible one is he/she who is blessed with fortune!" And the greatest fortune is gained when generosity makes everything seems good. Upon being generous person our selves, for us even the bad persons are going to appear as kind as the good ones.*)

This might be the reason for the crown *stupa* of Borobudur being empty inside. It is without message for there is nothing left to be spoken.

*) *In the insight meditation (Vipassana) there are at least two understandings of achievement. First, one may expel, or lessen, suffering through meditation practice. Second, meditation practice does not extinguish suffering but it grants a boundless capacity to suffer. One of the natures in this second kind of achievement is when the practitioner is without any condition to be influenced by whatever happens in life.*

The Rising Sun of Enlightenment



A fellow friend who is commonly mentioned in Sufism is Nasrudin. For some people, he is a symbol of comical and amusing matters whereas for some others Nasrudin represents a genius life for he frequently procreates amazing wisdoms of life.

One day, Nasrudin ran frantically to his master. As soon as he met the sage, without taking trouble to ask for permission Nasrudin hastily implored an aid. "Help me master, my house is turned into a living hell. A fussy wife, demanding parents in law, my children and their cousins running noisily here and there... Oh I will do whatever you say to get rid of this hell and create a heaven."

Assured that Nasrudin would keep his promise, the master asked: 'Are you in possession of any animal?' Nasrudin nimbly quacked that he had four geese, six chickens, seven goats, eight rabbits, and a number of birds. His master then

told Nasrudin to bring all of his animals into the house, together with the entire human inhabitants. Afterward, Nasrudin was to shut all doors and windows tightly. Not a single creature, whether human nor animal, might sneak out from the house for eleven days.

'But... but...', responded Nasrudin in a nervous tone. Firmly his master said, "Don't forget what you have promised me!" And so there was Nasrudin, reluctantly went home obeying his master's instruction.

Eleven days later Nasrudin returned, his steps much more muddled than ever before. 'O master... help me... pleaseee... not to mention the humans, even the goats are going insane eleven days in that house...' His master, with a sagacious smile, said, 'Now you may release all of the animals. You and your kin shall work together cleaning the house in cheerfulness.' A moment later Nasrudin revisited his master with a happy face. 'Thank you very much master, my house is now indeed a heaven!'

This is the story of humanity from the ancient to the present time. There are a lot of households changed into hell by hating and

rebuking one another. When this is put to an end, the very house with the same residents and animals becomes heaven. And, eventually, finding heaven is merely a matter of choosing the suitable comparison. If one succeed in doing so (in Nasrudin's story the comparison is his house crowded with animals), the gate of heaven is opened. When the comparison is always in a "more" condition (richer, prettier, more famous, wiser, etc.), then the gate is forever closed. Finally, life is actually a matter of attitude. Both heaven and hell are consequences of the attitude. If the manners are of grumbings and shortcomings, then hell is what will be seen. On the other hand, upon an attitude of patience and gratitude heaven shall be revealed.

The Sun of Enlightenment

The conclusion that life is a matter of attitude might be the reason for some masters to make their life perfect with a kind of manner that is full of beauty. In the beginning, it is done reluctantly under compulsion. What is the beauty in being derided and humiliated? Which side of disaster is beautiful? Brushing

Dzogchen's disciples only have a single task: to observe! To be more precise, it is to observe with awareness, not with judgment. To perceive when happiness comes. To notice the sorrow in time of despair. To witness the approaching success, and to realize the visit of failure. For anyone conscientious in the practice of observation, a day will come when his/her life is enlightened by the light of awareness



teeth is initially an activity one does reluctantly, yet upon noticing clean and healthy teeth it becomes a daily habit. The same thing works to happiness as well.

Chogyal Namkhai Norbu (*Dzogchen: The Self Perfected State*) is among masters stepped into the realm of beauty. According to this Tibetan master, there is nothing need to be changed. One does not even need to do any renouncement. Dzogchen's disciples only have a single task: to observe! To be more precise, it is to observe with awareness, not with judgment. To perceive when happiness comes. To notice the sorrow in time of despair. To witness the approaching success, and to realize the visit of failure. For anyone conscientious in the practice of observation, a day will come when his/her life is enlightened by the light of awareness. Deepak Chopra (*How to Know God: The Soul's Journey into the Mystery of Mysteries*), even wrote: '*The only clear path to God is a path of constant awareness*'. In other words, awareness is the enlightened path to God.

Lex Hixon (*Coming Home: the Experience of Enlightenment in Sacred Traditions*) is another

*To tell that all religions are the same
is just as difficult as to say that all
rivers are the same. On the other
hand, once souls reach enlightenment
then there will be one likeness:
beauty!*



example of masters who found the beauty. Most people are easily tempted to exaggerate the beauty of their own culture and underestimate others'. Nevertheless, Hixon is different. He reflects the same degree of beauty when he wrote about Heidegger, Krishnamurti, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi, Zen, I Ching, advaita vedanta, and also the Sufism master Bawa Muhaiyaddeen.

Like how water flows into the ocean along several river-paths, yet it shares the same expressions upon finding their final destination. It is bluish, wavy, salty, and turns white when reaches the shore. To tell that all religions are the same is just as hard as to say that all rivers are the same. On the other hand, once souls reach enlightenment (which Hixon termed as *coming home*) then there will be one likeness: beauty! Adopting the experience of Zen enlightenment, Hixon mentioned that '*Enlightenment is simply the blue lake and the green mountain*'. Enlightenment is simple, inexpensive, merry, and it is beautiful!

It is similar to the mountain climbers in an early morning. Being asked the direction of the sunrise, those from the west reply that it's in front of them whereas those from the east point to their backward. Though initially they are contradicting each other, at the summit they will laugh together on the disagreement. It is in this kind of friendly laughter that an immense beauty might be sensed



The similar account was also experienced by Stephen Mitchell (*The Enlightened Heart: an Anthology of Sacred Poetry*) who composed the great diversity of traditions (from Upanishad, Lao-Tzu, Izumi Shikibu, Santo Franciscus, Rumi, Kabir, William Shakespeare, Bibi Hayati to Robinson Jeffers) into a story originated from beauty to the beauty itself.

This is the reason for the enlightened masters to suggest the critical, skeptical, aggressive, and apathy students to simply continue their growth and journey. Like the flowing rivers those are going to become one in an ocean where they will share the same expression, wave, taste and color.

It is similar to the mountain climbers in an early morning. Being asked the direction of the sunrise, those from the west reply that it's in front of them whereas those from the east point to their backward. Though initially they are contradicting each other, at the summit they will laugh together on the disagreement.

It is in this kind of friendly laughter that an immense beauty might be sensed and life will then enter the realm of an everlasting beauty

as words of Lex Hixon's words: *'Once enlightenment has dawned, we are at home every where'*.

The Back Gate
Transforming Suffering
into the Ultimate Healing



Transforming Suffering into the Ultimate Healing



Once upon a time, there was a mother with one son and a daughter. The son was an ice cream peddler, therefore the mother lamented for him during the rainy days for almost no one buy from him. The daughter was happened to be an umbrella seller and so the mother grieved for her on the sunny days for she could only sell a few of her goods. And there went the mother, filled her life with nothing but sorrow.

This story is indeed an analogy, about how many recent lives are characterized by misery. There is always a reason or two to slip life into grief as disaster, disease, old age and death. Hence suffering becomes an upper stream in a river of life which contained by stress, complaint, sickness and conflict. A psychiatrist once said that numerous mental asylums are lacking of accommodation. Some of them even send patients those are not fully recovered yet to their family to be replaced by severe

*Only a few of us dare to say that, in
need to cry, do not cry upon death but
on birth instead for every birth
brings sickness, old age and finally
death*



patients who need more assistance and healing treatment.

Most people detest suffering. Perhaps because he was addressing his particular speak to public, Dalai Lama once mentioned that, *'There is something in common for all of us: evading suffering and longing for happiness.'* And this is indeed so human. Only a few of us dare to say that, in need to cry, do not cry upon death but on birth instead for every birth brings sickness, old age and finally death.

In other words, birth as well as life is incapable to escape suffering. Sorrow is the faithful companion in the every steps of life. No matter how hard people manage, how strong they fortify their selves, the devoted companion will always find his way.

Like the swaying of a pendulum, the harder and the more passionate one swing the pendulum of happiness, the greater is the temptation of suffering will become. This is the explanation for a number of over-excitement seekers are being greatly tempted by overabundance sufferings as well. This is also the one behind the WHO data that the United

*Like the swaying of a pendulum, the
harder and the more passionate one
swing the pendulum of happiness, the
greater is the temptation of suffering
will become*



States (as one of the biggest countries where the pursuit of happiness is greatly intense) is the biggest consumers of sleeping pills in the world. A researcher once compared Japan and Myanmar, two countries that both have Buddhism as their major religion (so that the comparison will be fairer). Japan is indeed a miraculously rare case in material achievement and far beyond compare to Burma in this respect. Nevertheless, Japan also has far greater number of social dilemmas such as suicide, divorce and depression than Burma. This fact is as if whispering the assurance that wherever lays abundant material wealth, there will be found plentiful suffering as well.

In the excellent realization of this pendulum reality, numerous ascetics, meditators, yogis, Sufis and other kinds of inner wanderer permit their pendulum of emotion to sway in a limited space. During happiness they fully understand that it is going to be replaced by suffering hence the over excitement of the celebration might be restrained. Therefore, when suffering indeed comes it is not so tempting.

*In the excellent realization of this
pendulum reality, numerous ascetics,
meditators, yogis, Sufis and other
kinds of inner wanderer permit their
pendulum of emotion to sway in a
limited space*



In Kahlil Gibran's beautiful verses (*The Prophet*) it is stated that, while we are conversing merrily with happiness in the lounge, suffering is waiting in our bed. In a more common sense, we share our dwelling with both happiness and suffering... and how may we escape suffering who settles in the very same residence with us?

For that reason, a number of masters then teach to step beyond the realm of happiness and suffering. In their terminology, both happiness and suffering are merely playthings for the infant souls during their growing to maturity. It is this evolution that needs the continuous interchanging of happiness and suffering.

However, a matured soul fully realizes that both happiness and suffering have the same natures: uncertainty and interchanging. Is not the dependency upon uncertainty makes life uncertain as well? Moreover, both happiness and suffering are originated from the same root which is desire. When desires are fulfilled happiness is the guest, and when they are not then agony is the visitor.

A matured soul fully realizes that both happiness and suffering have the same natures: uncertainty and interchanging. Is not the dependency upon uncertainty makes life uncertain as well?



Every traveler into self who has accomplished a certain distance understands that desires (eventually those accompanied by attachments) are the foundations of suffering. This kind of knowledge is the one guides a number of people to come into the realm of tranquility.

In contrary to the kind of happiness that is lustful to achieve this and that, compares this and that, and seeks to gain more than this and that, tranquility is all sufficient as it is. As the birds those are flying in the air, fishes those are swimming in the water, the wolves those are roaming in the forest, the sun that is shining during the day, and the stars those are twinkling in the evening time.

All are already perfect as they are. There is nothing to be added nor eliminated. Addition and elimination indeed might bring happiness. However, in that kind of happiness mind is not completely calm and balance for there is always fear that the happiness will be replaced by grief.

In the understanding of those who have perceived tranquility, a soul will remain poor

*All are already perfect as they are.
There is nothing to be added nor
eliminated. Addition and elimination
indeed might bring happiness, however,
in that kind of happiness mind is not
completely calm and balance for there
is always fear that the happiness will
be replaced by grief*



no matter how wealthy he/she is without any sense of contentment and even the poorest shall remain wealthy if he/she can feel sufficient. Therefore, a seer once said that: 'Enlightenment is like the reflection of the moon in the water. The moon does not get wet, the water is not separated'. In other expression, the core of enlightenment is being untouchable. To remain calm upon being insulted, and humble when praised. Not clinging to happiness nor rejecting suffering. Exactly as the lotus that does not get wet in the water and remained unstained in the mud.

One vital origin for this untouchability is the achievement in training oneself to feel content. Reaching this state, there is nothing can disturb the natural flow of the soul. Nothing to be embraced nor thrown away. There is no positive thing need to be gained neither the negative thing to be refused. This is the ultimate healing. As water is naturally wet, sugar is naturally sweet, and the one who attained ultimate healing is naturally full of compassion. For that reason, the only reason why the ultimately healed person still here in society, is because of compassion. Everything –

*To remain calm upon being insulted,
and humble when praised. Not clinging
to happiness nor rejecting suffering*



from eating, working to praying – is done under the spirit of compassion.

In a simple message of a Guru, look inside to the things that harm you, and then promise to Guru that you will not repeat the same mistake to the others, that is compassion. Every time there is a chance to help, just help as spontaneous as right hand helping left hand when it was coincidentally injured by hammer, that is a deeper compassion. Give, give, and give until one day deeply realize that there is no giver, no receiver, no activity of giving. There is only one single cosmic body, that is perfect compassion.

Attachment 1
Meditation on
the Ultimate Healing



Meditation on the Ultimate Healing



Upon comprehending the previous reflective substances, a question emerges: “Is there any useful way or step might fasten human’s progress to enter the tranquility?” Similar to the previous argument, words are less important than practice in the daily life. In this matter, please permit this little book to share some materials to be contemplated.

1. Happy, Sad, Fair, and Flowing

It has become a daily secret of common people that life is marked by a cycle which is inclined upon happiness, declined on sadness, and flattened during the fair/moderate moments. Analyzing this further, one shall notice that excitement is very likely to bring attachment. People expect the pleasure to be everlasting, which is impossible. When excitement fades, sadness will be its replacement. In contrary to excitement, sorrow raises a likeliness to “escape” from it as an indication of refusal. On the other hand,

In happiness, actually the mind is not completely calm and balance for there is an anxiety that the happiness might be replaced by suffering



when life goes fairly/moderately boredom is very likely to visit.

It is clearly visible that whoever attached to pleasure, over-frightened by sadness, and bored by a fair life, will experience difficulty in stepping into the serenity. Attachment, refusal and boredom are worth to be contemplated as the companions of life. This is the point where the contemplation on a flowing life is an important matter.

The water in a river might safely and comfortably pass all barriers (stones, plants, sands, mud, et cetera) by their supple flow. Without any attachment nor refusal water reaches the ocean. The matter is the same with life, which flows without any significant obstruction as long as it is lived with flexibility.

Please notice the difference between a living tree and the expired one, and between a living human's body with one of the deceased. Both comparisons tell that the living one is more flexible than the dead, and therefore ensuring that suppleness is closer to life than death. The other similar analogy is that of someone who fell into a deep pond. He fought the water and

*Happiness - sorrow, lamentation -
merriment, and success - failure are
but streams of life bringing their own
messages*



therefore sunk. Being dead, his body floats on the surface of the water. In other words, whoever fond of doing opposition in life (by dissatisfactions, complaints, blaming, unhappiness and ungratefulness) is likely to be drowned in the ocean of life. On the contrary, life would let whoever ceases resistance to float on its surface.

In a master's language, happiness and suffering are merely toys for the infant souls. For the matured ones, both happiness and sadness have the same nature that is constant interchanging. The next question for them is why depending life to something uncertain and constantly changing? This is the one that introduces some matured souls to the principle of flowing, flowing, and nothing but flowing.

2. Competition and acceptance

It has been a public secret that the nowadays life is made frantic by competition. When there is even rivalry between kindergarten and elementary school students, it is immensely great between adults particularly in the struggle for money. It is then understandable that conflicts, wars, battles, murderers, and

*For the wanderers into self, the
illuminating light is a guidance
whereas the darkening blackness is an
indication of profundity*



divorces are spreading here and there. Most people are certain that competition enhances material development and economic progress. Nevertheless, only a few are willing to comprehend that competition has become the source of problems in numerous life.

Contemplate the mother Earth, and one will notice that it contains nearly everything in the universe. Behold also the sky-scraping mountains and the oceans those are great and bottomless. The Earth is so inclusive for it accepts whatever placed or planted on it, mountains are immensely high because they accept all stones put onto them, and oceans are that great and deep as they accept every drop of water granted by nature. In their capacity as the symbols of the nature (and many masters are in agreement that nature is God's language), they are as if whispering that acceptance toward life is the beginning of abundance in life.)* Accepting growth, advancement, and wealth is certainly easy

* In some regions of the world (in Bali, for example) a holy site is understood to be indicated by the encirclement of a mountain (or hill) with an ocean. Balinese refer to this as *nyegara-gunung*. This enhances the argument that acceptance toward life is not only liberating and becoming the origin of abundance for it might be developed into the foundation of divinity as well.

*Happiness and suffering are merely
toys for the infant souls. For the
matured ones, both happiness and
sadness have the same nature that is
constant interchanging*



whereas only the developed souls are able to accept calamity, decline, and suffering.

3. The Illuminating and Charming Patience

Sufism seers often wrote that no preciousness is more valuable than the preciousness of patience, and this is indeed worthy to be contemplated by every soul desiring to step into the realm of tranquility.

One of the amazing patience models in this 21st century is Dalai Lama. Since his teenage he fled his homeland of Tibet and became a fugitive in Northern India. The length of Dalai Lama's suffering river is beyond thinking. His country being occupied by other nation, the intense destruction upon Tibetan tradition and culture by the Chinese government, and most of his days those are filled by reading letters and news describing the suffering of his people.

However, one of his translators who has been working with him for more than ten years once revealed that Dalai Lama's life is a happy one. The prominent asset of his happiness is patience. Dalai Lama's patience is not only

*Accepting growth, advancement, and
wealth is certainly easy whereas only
the developed souls are able to accept
calamity, decline, and suffering*



flourished in the form of happiness for it also granted him a Nobel Award for Peace in 1989. In 2007 he received the highest civil citizen award from US senate and government that makes him at the same level with George Washington and Pope the second. The world's acknowledgement to Dalai Lama is so astonishing, and he is greatly honored not only by Buddhist communities. Wherever he goes (North America, Latin America, Europe, Australia, and Asia) Dalai Lama always respectably welcomed.

Some friends do have cynical opinion about this and commented things such as, 'Is not Dalai Lama's attitude the one causing Tibetan's sufferings and incapability to be independent?' This kind of comment is certainly understandable in this era where people measure everything from the external matters. Nevertheless, some western friends whose inner journeys are remarkable comment differently: 'Dalai Lama is suffering to Tibet, but blessing *to the world*'. It is because of Tibet's present condition that its sublime virtues might be studied by the world. Those values (demonstrated by how people are greatly fond of Dalai Lama and other Tibetan

*Do your observation with the eyes of
advaita (non-dualism), protect
yourself with the armor of patience,
and, in need for a weapon, use the
weapon of wisdom*



masters' teaching) have proven to take their part in protecting the peace of the world. Above all of this, isn't it the Chinese government's attitude that makes the patience of Dalai Lama and Tibet even more illuminating and charming?

4. Advaita, Non-dualism, and Shunyata.

From the journey of contemplation in Chapter 1 about suffering and in Chapter 2 on happiness, one shall comprehend that there is nothing in life totally positive nor wholly negative. Suffering that is commonly feared is actually a vitamin that is strengthening the soul whereas happiness that is being sought after might as well become the origin of perilous clinging.

Their journey being brightened by such illumination, some persons in the East are enlightening their selves with *advaita*.**) In common language, *advaita* is similar to

**) *Advaita in the eastern philosophy terminology is similar to non-dualistic life in western terminology (Please refer to the explanation in 'The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion: a complete survey of the teachers, traditions, and literature of Asian wisdom', Shambala, 1994).*

*One shall learn to become a witness
without being emotionally involved in
the streams of life those are the
torrent of suffering, happiness, and
boredom*



westerners' non-dualistic life. Right – wrong, good – bad, success – fail, subject – object, day – night, poor – rich, sacred – unholy, and any other dualities actually are not contradicting materials. In each of those pairs, the two elements are two sides of a same coin. Subject exists because of the presence of object. Wealthy could be sensed better by those who previously experienced poverty. Divinity will be more stirring for a heart emerges from impurity. Success will be more appreciated if it is gained through failure. A good person is a teacher as well as a bad one. Righteousness enlightens, and so does unfairness.

Some people ask that if all are meaningful, providing guidance and useful, then what is left to be argued?

Hence, it is understandable that a number of masters attained this stage then entered the realms of *shunya* which is tranquil, quiet, serene, and incredibly beautiful. Those sages' life will then filled with smile, silent, and pray for the blessing of all creations.

Inspired by the beautiful life of *advaita* that attract a lot of masters to enter *shunya*, a

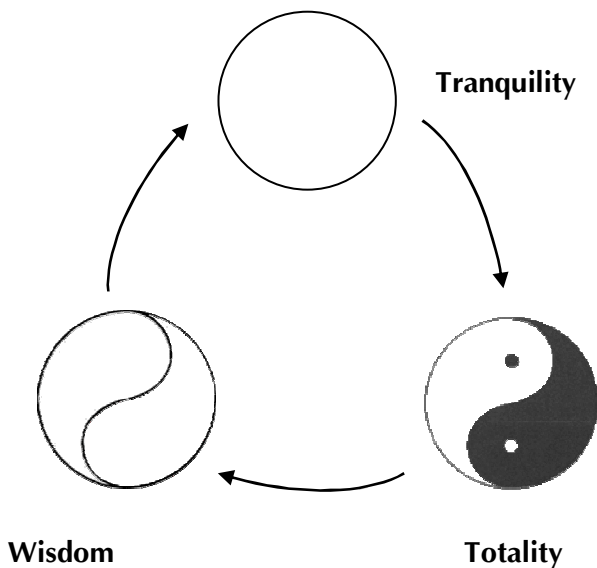
disciple once asked whether there is any daily instruction to make practice become easier. Calmly and patiently, a master provided the answer: 'Do your observation with the eyes of *advaita* (non-dualism), protect yourself with the armor of patience, and, in need for a weapon, use the weapon of wisdom'.

The eyes of *advaita* obviously means not to be over-frightened by suffering, not clinging to happiness, nor easily bored by a moderate life. As mentioned in the previous elaboration, the important matter here is to flow, flow, and flow.***) One shall learn to become a witness without being emotionally involved in the stream of life (whether in the stream of suffering, happiness, or boredom).

***) *There are various approaches among eastern masters in this subject. Sri Nisargadatta in 'I am that' (Chetana, 1973) always answers: 'I am that'. 'I' am definitely not suffering, happiness, nor boredom. A number of Vipassana instructors as Larry Rosenberg in 'Breath by Breath: the Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation' (Shambhalla Classics, 2004), or Joseph Goldstein in 'Seeking the Heart of Wisdom' (Shambhalla Classics, 2001) provide the alternative of "choiceless awareness". Being aware upon the existence of suffering, happiness and boredom, without choosing between them. This is the one frequently mentioned as the practice of the insight meditation.*

Patience is a kind of armor protecting one from trials and temptations, and the journey of wisdom ends in *shunya* (emptiness). As the question mentioned previously, what can be said if all are meaningful and useful?

Another approach into the tranquility applies the scheme of the three circles as follow:



In this scheme it is explained that when a soul is born he/she is full of sincerity, trust, and

faith. Therefore all babies are born with soft skin, calm eyes, and purity. This is tranquility. Education turns the circle of tranquility into the one of totality. There is white for there is black, and there is goodness for there is badness. However, the greed of desires transforms the totality into duality. Accepting the white and rejecting the black, receiving the good and refusing the bad... and so it starts the suffering and inflames life... Nevertheless those are the burning and the worries in the duality life that encourage a lot of human to seek wisdom! Wisdom where everything looks alike and completing each other. Ugly women are as valuable as the beautiful ones for they make the beauty ones look even more beautiful. Failure is as meaningful as success since failure teaches one to be careful. These are the language of wisdom. Dualities are melted and united in wisdom. When wisdom is constantly practiced it leads to tranquility, particularly because all are perceived as useful and meaningful. Hence all words, logics, oppositions, and dualities lost their substance.

An elder in Bali yet has other steps to perceive tranquility. Firstly, one is supposed to practice sitting, that is an *inner centering* (training body

and mind to be calm, balance, and focused). Secondly, he/she will see knowledge in everything to be taken/learned. Upon the frequent experience of calmness, steadiness, and single-mindedness in daily life, guiding knowledge^{****}) are going to emerge. Thirdly and lastly, there will be nothing (in Balinese language, *sing ada apa*). Directed by the knowledge, the practitioner then entering the realm of nothingness which is similar to the circle of tranquility mentioned previously.

^{****}) *Numerous practitioners are obstructed in discovering this kind of knowledge, especially because they perceive it as "coincidence" and therefore they do not believe in its guiding capacity.*

Attachment 2

Meditation on Light



Meditation on Light



As one might clearly perceive within life in many nations, there are too many souls evolving from darkness to darkness. Feeling insufficient by the material income (dark, dissatisfaction) they steal and corrupt (dark). Unsatisfied to their wife (dark), they cross with another woman (dark). Failed to be elected as a leader (dark) they create agonizing troubles (dark). As the result, human life is moving from one kind of darkness to the others.

Only after a short peaceful moment in the end of the frightening cold war between two superpower nations, the harmony was devastated by the terrorist bombings which brought the same horror with the cold war itself. Furthermore, this was then followed by the fearsome invasion of some forceful countries to Afghanistan and Iraq. And there is not yet a sign that this frightening darkness is about to cease.

*Light might only be emerged by a
beautiful synthesis of both the
positive and negative forces*



Learning from the nature, there is no darkness may be extinguished by darkness for only light is capable to repel it. Hence, this is the time when humanity might only find refuge from the temptations of darkness by initiating the light within their selves.

As discovered by the electricity inventors like Edison, light might only be emerged by a beautiful synthesis of both the positive and negative forces. Unfortunately, this very synthesis is the one forgotten by human in their greed of choosing the positive (as success, righteousness, goodness, divinity, et cetera) over the negative ones (such as failure, wickedness, badness, impurity, at cetera).

Take notice at the things taught at school, parents' expectations for their children, achievements sought after in one's career, and even to prayers whispered in sacred sites. Most of them are demanding for success, goodness, and divinity. Everything related to failure, badness, and impurity are perceived as the wastes of life rejected by everyone. Meanwhile, no matter how scholarly and wise a person is, he/she is still incapable to cease

*The origin of the human body was a
brilliant light. It was sensuous desires
that turned it dark*



the wheel of life rolls to failure, badness, and impurity.

Introspecting this particular reality, a number of sages thus train their selves to renounce the greed in choosing positive over negative. It is obviously easy to accept abundance whereas only developed souls are proficient to accept shortcomings. It is not exhausting to embrace success, while there is no one may do so to failure save those with extra supply of energy. It is certainly effortless to befriend the physical body upon supreme health, but only souls close to enlightenment might do so upon sickness.

Consequently, some eastern philosophies teach that in the ancient time human body was formerly a brilliant light motioning without burden from one place to the others. However, some descended to earth, nimbly touched and tasted everything they found to became addicted by the flavor. Thus the light body extinguished and transformed/replaced by the dark clay-made body as what we have now.

*The preliminary step in rediscovering
the light body is to put passions and
sensuous desires back to their former
position as servants instead of
masters*



Inspired by this account, the origin of the human body was a brilliant light. It was sensuous desires that turned it dark. Hence, the preliminary step in rediscovering the light body is to put passions and sensuous desires back to their former position as servants instead of masters.

This is the most important and difficult step, particularly because passions and sensuous desires have been reigning us for so long. Eventually, this step has to be taken if one wishes to regain his/her light body. Only after repositioning pleasures and sensuous desires to their quality as servants one may easily discover the brilliance and beautiful synthesis of positive and negative.

Related to this subject, Balinese elders have a useful understanding about human. In the early tradition of Bali, human being is described as *dewa ya kala ya*, which means that both forces of God and evil live within human. Different to other traditions that confront God's might to the evil's, for Balinese God is a totality/wholeness.

*In Balinese tradition, God is a
totality/wholeness*



Therefore, the heart of Bali's spiritual circle is the Pura (Balinese Hindu's worshipping place) Besakih. In its centre lies the Penataran Agung set of Pura buildings which summit is marked with the *kiwa - tengen* (left - right) symbols. For common people, left is the opposite of right, but in the old Balinese tradition it is the point of balance between left and right that generates the heart of enlightening Dharma.

In one of Tantric texts it is stated that *tengen* is the path of common people whereas *kiwa* is the path of negation. When *tengen* is being negated with *kiwa* there appears the light of Tantra. Hence, it is frequently said that Bali is shining the world. As written in "*The Light of Bali*" section, Bali is the only place where two terrorist bombings were not followed by grudge and anger. On the contrary, four years later Bali was awarded as *the best island in the world* by a number of international magazines. As if Bali is enlightening the world by its denial to encounter anger with antagonism, attack with vengeance, and blood with blood. In Bali, hatred is turned into wonder/amazement.

This is the meditation on light in practice. Firstly, passions and sensuous desires are

*Bali is enlightening the world by its
denial to encounter anger with
antagonism, attack with vengeance,
and blood with blood. In Bali, hatred
is turned into wonder/amazement*



maintained and returned to their original position as servants. Secondly, greediness to accept only the positive and refuse the negative is neutralized by wisdom. Thirdly, the beautiful synthesis between positive and negative is performed. Lastly, the synthesis enlivens the life-illuminating light.

Attachment 3
Meditation on Enlightenment



Meditation on Enlightenment



Meditation as a Sign of the Age

In many aspects of life (science, technology, life style, materialism, spirituality, etc.) the western world is frequently used as the standard. Whatever things going on in the west is not only become criterions in other parts of the world for they also become the signs of the direction of the civilization.

Referring to this kind of historical reality, a data in the west that is worth to be scrutinized is the fast growing of the meditation centers. Numerous people understand that this fact is a reflection of many things.

Firstly, the western society is far more advanced in exploring the realms of intellectuality through their science and technology. Hence, the immense development of meditation centers proves that science and technology do not solve all of mankind's

problems. There are many regions of life left untouched by both science and technology. The emerge of scholars/thinkers instigate on paralleling physics and spirituality (as Fritjof Capra, an eminent physician with his remarkable work *The Tao of Physics*) is one of the proofs. Paul Davies in *The Mind of God* also conducted a physics exploration, which ends on the search of God's intelligence. In some points of journey, quests of intellectuality are gradually being enriched by spirituality.

Secondly, Western society is more advanced in the matter of materialistic life as well for they have experimented with materialism since long time ago. The immense growth of meditation centers in the west reflects that materialism and other pursuits of external source for happiness in life have produced many kinds of agonizing social dilemmas (stress, depression, conflict, war, divorce, drug addiction). A writer in the west asked seriously: *When is Enough Enough?* At this point, the development of meditation centers is a sign of human's satiation of searching the outer sources of happiness. We now begin to search inward.

*Some quests of intellectuality are
being gradually enriched by
spirituality*



Thirdly, one important pillar of human's civilization is religion. Throughout the long way of history, religion has become exclusive zones barricaded with high walls. Through the growing of meditation centers those walls are being tore down. In meditation practice it is frequently happen that a lot of people from different religious backgrounds walk the inward journey together in a same place, same technique, and under a same instructor. Whereas religion imprisons people into boxes and behind walls, meditation liberates them with the spirit of friendship and peace. As believed by many western friends, meditation helps turning someone into a better devotee of his/her own religion. Lama Surya Das in his beautiful work *Awakening the Buddha Within*, quoted one of his disciples' saying as follow: "My parents hate me when they know that I am a Buddhist, but they love me when they know that I am a Buddha". The parents are shocked seeing their daughter goes to Vihara (Buddhist monastery), but they love and proud discovering the kindness she shows in her daily life. Don't need to mention Hindu and Buddhist devotees in the west those naturally have faith in meditation.

*Materialism and other pursuits of
external source for happiness in life
have produced many kinds of
agonizing social dilemmas*



Fourthly, in a part of Buddhist scripture it was said that eons ago human's body was once similar to the deity's and therefore was made of brilliant light. However, some of our ancient predecessors descended to earth and tasted sensuous pleasure which turned human's body and journey into "dark" (filled with desires). The advanced stage of meditation is termed as realizing the body of light. This is also the reason for some deities in certain levels to return to earth in human's body in order to improve the quality of their *samadhi*. If, in human's body that consists of contradicting elements (fire - water, earth - ether) their *samadhi* might be perfect, then its quality must be improved upon their return to their light body.

Meditation and Medication

There are obviously numerous reasons behind the rapid growing number of meditation practitioners, and one important matter in this case is the *medication* nature/quality of meditation. Many comrades in the west understand and believe that the spelling similarity of the words *meditation* and *medication* is not a coincidence for many souls

*Whereas religion imprisons people
into boxes and behind walls,
meditation liberates them with the
spirit of friendship and peace*



have been healed through meditation practices.

Even more, meditation paths have liberated many souls from the seize and dictatorship of all external factors (wealth, position, fame, praise, and criticism). This is the starting point from which meditation opens the door into the dawn of freedom. This combination of both the healing and liberating qualities of meditation is the vital point that turns meditation as one alternative for societies in many parts of the world those are now started to be psychologically “heated”.

The Tree of Meditation

There is one thing in common between plants and meditation that both are progressing to “the light”. Trees, as we know, always grow toward the sunlight. The similar thing happened with the souls wandering in the path of meditation for they are discovering an illuminating light.

Therefore, the tree analogy is useful in the brief explanation of the meditation journey.

*Meditation, in a certain advance level,
is termed as "realizing the body of
light"*



The Prospective Lands for Meditation

Every plant requires potential soil to grow. The thing is similar in meditation, in which it grows in the land of our daily life. As written by Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*: '*Your daily life is your true temple*'. In other words, our daily life is our genuine house of worship. This point enables us to understand why a Moslem's early spiritual journey is guarded by *syariat*, before he/she then encounters *hakikat* and *makrifat* as he advances to higher levels. Christianity underlines the importance of social solemnity in every day's life, whereas a Buddhist' wandering starts with *sila* (morality in daily life). The early steps Yogic journey of a Hindu devotee is sheltered by *Dharma*, *Arta*, *Kama*, and *Moksha* (do as much good deeds as possible, whereas the single desire allowed to be exist is the desire for freedom).

It is difficult to imagine that someone may reach a distant step in his/her meditation journey, moreover attained enlightenment, when his/her daily life is filled with anger, greed, hatred, envy, and other defilements. If things went worse, the particular meditation

*There is one thing in common between
plants and meditation that both are
progressing to "the light"*



wandering might even turned to be fatally dangerous.

The simple analogy is: on taking the inward journey (meditation), someone is as if entering the center of an extremely noisy crowd (because our inside is indeed crowded and noisy). For instance, if you were a college student then your appearance (dress, hair cut) and attitude will make it easier for you to meet and befriend your fellows. In other expression, our daily-self determines who will be the guide/overseer in our inward journey.

The beautiful thing in this matter is that a person with good, honest, and sincere daily life will easily find a pure and sacred guide inside him/her self. On the contrary, it would be dangerous if someone who is full of greed and anger in everyday life forced him/her self with outstanding intensity to take the inward journey, especially if he/she meditates in sacred places like India, Nepal, Tibet, and Bali. This kind of person has a great chance to meet deceiving hypocrites whom they wrongly recognize as a saintly guidance but then haul them to a destructive point. Therefore, it is extremely important for determined

*Our daily-self determines who will be
the guide/overseer in our inward
journey*



meditation enthusiasts to conduct good and wholesome daily life for it is indeed the genuine prospective land for meditation.

The Root of Meditation

As the root of a tree absorbs and cultivate the soil's essences to turn them into growing resources, meditation is more or less the same. Life (together with success-fail, up-down, praised-blamed) is a splendid resource of meditation though a great wisdom is needed to turn those life resources into the essences of growing.

For those with limited wisdom, the ups-downs and tremors of life easily corrupt and sicken their souls. On the other hand, the dualities of life (rich-poor, bright-dark, success-fail, praised-blamed) greatly enrich a sage's journey. Development in meditation is impossible if the practitioner is still being affected by the strikes of duality.

In the beginning of a journey, duality indeed causes conflict, but the conflict itself will be pleasuring once a practitioner can get use to it. At the point where wisdom is established, not

*The most important root of
meditation is the ability to attain the
non-dualistic life*



a single duality is able to make life unstable. All are viewed and observed with the same distance. Therefore, the most important root of meditation is the ability to attain the non-dualistic life. Not being overjoyed upon happiness nor over-distressed upon misfortune. All of the dualities (right-wrong, good-bad, genuine-fake, sacred-sinned) are viewed without any attachment and given the same distance. Whatever vision comes up during meditation will be seen and observed as if watching pictures in the television those are constantly changing from one moment to the other.

A Sufism sage once made the following prayer: *'O God, if I love Thee because of my longing to heaven then abandon me from it. If I make my prayer for my fear of hell then throw me into it.* Christ's saying which is frequently quoted by those who have attained the non-duality is *'Be still and know that I am God'*. In *Bhagavad Gita*, Khrisna mentioned that *'Such equanimity is Yoga'*. In other words, Yoga is the unshakable mind amidst temptations and tremors. Sincere wanderer in Buddhist path knows that *upekkha* (boundless equanimity, or the supreme steadiness of the soul) is a greatly

*Practicing too advanced or too basic
technique compared to our own soul's
evolution level will bring the sense of
dullness and is not fruitful*



important quality. *Dasa Paramita*, the seven factors of enlightenment, and *Brahma Vihara* are all lead to *upekkha*.

The Stem of Meditation

After the land has been prepared and the root has been strengthened, it is the time to do something with the stem. In this step, it is important to try various meditation techniques. There are many benefits for someone in the first stages of inner wandering to try numerous meditation methods.

Firstly, by this one might recognize the splendor of the meditation jungle. As a note, alike to a jungle with various of plants, there are a lot of meditation techniques as well. Observe this diversity of meditation methods as a jungle with various kinds of plants. This is especially to protect the practitioner from slipping into the foul and dangerous fanaticism that will make one think that his/her technique is good whereas other people techniques are wrong.'

Secondly, to take an attempt on various methods is very useful to find the suitable

*Enlightenment is to become one with
the journey itself*



technique for a soul's level of development. Upon practicing a technique which is too advanced or too basic compared to a soul's level of development, one will feel it as dull and useless.

Thirdly, someone is very likely to encounter the suitable technique if he/she is sincere in practice, and also because the appropriate time has come for him/her to discover the particular technique. One might sense the indication that he/she has find the most fitting method when he/she feels as if something is growing inside him/her and he/she is continuously experience beautiful desire to practice. In this step, meditation has started to become one with the practitioner.

The Leaf of Meditation

When someone has found a suitable method (or, even better, a teacher), it means that it is the time for him/her to practice as intensely as possible. In Zen's language, meditation is to eat when one is hungry, drink when thirsty, and sleep when sleepy. In other words, daily life is the meditation itself. Sitting, standing, walking, are meditations as long as they are

*A master meditates in every stair and
step of life*



conducted with awareness, especially if this continuous awareness in daily life is enhanced by boundless emanation of loving-kindness.

The practitioner, though he/she is still in human body, yet his inner substance is starting to learn to become a divine being.

Whoever continuously enlightens his/her daily life with awareness shall unveil that life (together with all of its elements and factors) is a splendorous object of meditation. Hence, one should recognize, observe, and study his/her self for it is in the self that the supreme mystery conceals. In Buddha Gotama's words, it is in this more or less two meters long body that human may discover the truth. This is the leaf of meditation.

The Flower of Meditation

For those in the beginning and intermediate levels, they may sense the flourishing of meditation by the feelings of calmness, peacefulness, gratefulness, the ability to accept own and other people's shortcomings, more patience, and sincerity in their daily life. Though such feelings are going to come and go, the practitioner will experience them more

Karma ceases to work for a master who attained rigpa (the natural state of mind). Rigpa is also frequently referred to as "the birth place of all the awakened ones"



frequently as his/her practice is getting more and more intense.

In the beginning, these feelings indeed arise the practitioner's attachment to them for he/she feels that every practicing session has to be filled with such feelings or he/she is going to be disappointed. However, this is yet one phase of the journey that has to be experienced. One should view disappointment as an info that there are still many things in his/her self those require improvement.

The Fruit of Meditation

For practitioners from the upper intermediate until the master levels, they are going to understand meditation as *a journey without goal*. Enlightenment is to become one with the journey.

There is only one important thing for a master that is to be calm and untouchable.

In other words, a master utilizes every step and stair of life as meditation. For common people, there is a separation between

*This state of rigpa is praised by all
masters who are illuminating the
world*



meditation and daily life, whereas for masters, meditation and daily life are one. Life is meditation, and meditation is life.

Thus Zen practitioners mention that enlightenment is the blue lakes and the green hills. There is no difference between an enlightened and a common person. All are one. Dainin Katagiri (a zen master) is even more surprising by his statement '*Wanting Enlightenment is a big mistake.*' It is stated as a mistake because even the desire to be enlightened indicates that a seeker is still being separated with his/her goal. For the masters, desires vanish, self fades away, and then they shall step into the gate of liberation: attaining the non-attainment.

Tantric masters (as Chogyam Trungpa in *Crazy Wisdom*) underline the importance of being *totally hopeless*. It is the condition when someone is walking his/her journey without any slightest hope for hope signifies that there is something which is being sought after. Pursuit and seeking are indicators for someone who has not reach his/her destination. For those who have arrived in their destination, there is nothing more to be searched,

moreover to be chased. There is only a single thing left that is the unity with the journey.

In Dzogchen (a Tibetan ancient teaching which usually understood as 'the grand perfection' and frequently mentioned as the synonym of Tantra, especially the *atiyoga tantra*) there are numerous excellent masters and teachings about liberation. Many masters (as Professor Namkhai Norbu in his works about Dzogchen like *Dzogchen: Self Perfected State*) agree that *among the paths of liberation this is the supreme*. This teaching is often perceived as *the teaching beyond cause and effect*, which indicates a kind of realms of attainment where the karmic law (the law of cause and effect) cease to work.

Karma ceases to work when a master attained *rigpa* (the natural state of mind). *Rigpa* is also frequently referred to as *the birth place of all the awakened ones*. Whatever things occur during meditation (or life), the mind is always in a state which is perfectly calm and balance. Hence, in English *rigpa* commonly described as *the state of pure and total presence*. It is an attainment for the mind where there is no longer any positive thing to be added nor

negative thing needed to be eliminated. *Nothing positive to accept, nothing negative to reject.* The pleasuring things do not have to arise attachment whereas the annoying ones do not have to produce anger.

Manjushrimitra (in *Primordial Experience*) even mentioned that *'The state of pure and total presence is equally praised by all Teachers who have been the light of the world.'* This level of *rigpa* is praised by all masters who are illuminating the world. Those who frequently experience this state will understand that this is where *the flash of knowing* frequently appears.

Welcome to the first and the last liberation! It is described as the first and yet the last liberation for all things are originated from here and shall end (or, for the masters who have arrived in the stage, it means "have ended") here as well. It is similar to a perfect cycle (which in the East is symbolized by Mandala or perfection). Where the journey is started, there it shall be ended as well.

References

Capra, Fritjof: *The Tao of physics. An exploration of the parallels between modern physics and eastern mysticism.* Flamingo Glasgow 1992

Chen, Chao-Hsiu: *The bamboo oracle, confucian wisdom for every day life.* Journey edition Boston Tokyo 1998

Chodron, Pema: *When things fall apart, heart advice for difficult times.* Shambala Classic Boston, London 2000

Chodron, Pema: *The wisdom of no escape and the path of loving kindness.* Shambala Classics Boston, London 2001

Chopra, Deepak: *How to know God. The soul's journey into the mystery of mysteries.* Rider London Sydney 2000

Cleary, Thomas (ed): *Zen essence, the science of freedom.* Shambala Boston and London 2000

Das, Lama Surya: *Awakening the Buddha within, Tibetan wisdom for the western world.* Broadway Books New York 1997

Davies, Paul: *The mind of God. The scientific basis for rational world.* Touchstone New York 1993

Dyer, Wayne W.: *There's a spiritual solution to every problem.* HarperCollins Publishers Sydney London 2001

Gawain, Shakti: *Creating true prosperity.* New World Library Novato California 1997

Gibran, Kahlil: *The prophet.* Penguin Arkana London 1992

Goldstein, Jan: *Sacred wounds, succeeding because of life's pain.* ReganBooks 2003

Goldstein, Joseph with Jack Kornfield: *Seeking the heart of wisdom. The path of insight meditation.* Shambala Classics Boston London 2001

Gyatso, Thubten: *Transforming problems into the path.* Amitaba Buddhist Center Singapore 1999.

Hanh, Thich Nhat: *Peace is every step, the path of mindfulness in everyday life.* Rider London Sydney 1991

Hanh, Thich Nhat: *Present moment wonderful moment, mindfulness verses for daily living.* Parallax Press Berkely California 1990

Helminski, Kabir: *The Rumi collection.* Shambala Library Boston and London 2005

Hixon, Lex: *Coming home, the experience of enlightenment in sacred traditions.* Larson Publication New York 1995

Jaworski, Joseph: *Sincronicity and the path of leadership.* Berret-Koehler Publisher 1998

Katagiri, Dainin: *Returning to silence. Zen practice in daily life.* Shambala Boston and London 1988

Krishnamurti, J: *This light in oneself, true meditation.* Shambala Boston and London 1999

Maharaj, Sri Nisargadatta : *I am That, talks with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj.* Translated by Maurice Frydman. Revised and edited by Shudakar S. Dikshit. Chetana Bombay 1973

Manjusrimitra: *Primordial experience. An introduction to Dzogs-chen meditation.* Translated by Namkhai Norbu and Kennard Lipman. Shambala Boston London 2001

McMillen, Kim with Alison McMillen: *When I love myself enough.* Sidgwick & Jackson London 2001

Merton, Thomas: *Dialogues with silence.* Edited by Jonathan Montaldo. HarperSanFrancisco New York 2001

Ming, Sosan's Hsin Hsin: *The book of nothing, a song of enlightenment.* Andrew McMeel Publishing Kansas City 2002

Mitchell, Stephen (ed): *The enlightend heart, an anthology of sacred poetry.* HarperPerennial Newyork 1989

Murpy, Joseph: *The amazing laws of cosmic mind power.* Reward Book 2001

Naimy, Mikhail: *The book of Mirdad.* translated into Indonesian language by PT One Earth Media Jakarta 2006

Newton, Michael: *Journey of souls, case studies of life between lives.* Llewellyn Publication Minnesota USA 1996

Norbu, Chogyal Namkhai: *Dzogchen, the self-perfected state.* Edited by Adriano Clemente. Translated from the Italian by John Shane. Snow Lion Publication Ithaca New York 1996

Osho: *Zen, the path of paradox.* St. Martin's Griffin New York 2001

Peck, M. Scott: *The road less travelled, The new psychology of love, traditional values and spiritual growth.* Arrow London 1990

Pelzer, Dave: *An Inspirational story, A Child called 'It'. One child's courage to survive.* Health Communication 1995

Ribur Rinpoche: *How to generate boddhicitta.* Amitaba Buddhist Center Singapore 1999

Rosenberg, Larry with David Guy: *Breath by breath. The liberating practice of insight meditation.* Shambala classics. Boston 1998

Schimmel, Annemarie: *Rumi's world, The life and work of the great sufi poet.* Shambala Boston and London 2001

Schuhmacher, Stephen, Gert Woener (ed): *The encyclopedia of eastern philosophy and religion.* Shambala Boston 1994.

Siegel, Bernie: *Love, medicine and miracles.* Rider London Sydney 1986

Siegel, Bernie: *Peace, love and healing, the path to self healing.* London Sydney 1982

Simpkins, Annellen and Alexander Simpkins: *Zen in ten, easy lessons for spiritual growth.* Tuttle Publishing Boston Tokyo 2003

Thondup, Tulku: *The healing power of mind, simple meditation exercises for health, well-being, and enlightenment.* Shambala Boston and London 1998

Tolle, Eckhart: *Stillness Speaks.* New World Library USA 2003

Trungpa, Chogyam: *Crazy wisdom.* Shambala Boston and London 2001

Trungpa, Chogyam: *Journey without goal, the tantric wisdom of the Buddha.* Shambala Boston and London 2000

Trungpa, Chogyam: *Meditation in action.* Shambala Library Boston London 2004

Viscott, David: *Finding your strength in difficult times, a book on meditation.* Contemporary Books Chicago, New York 1993

Whiteside, Patrick: *The little book of happiness, your guide to a better life.* Andrew McMeel Publishing Kansas City 2000

Back Cover

Suffering, grief, and lamentation are the major natures of life in the recent days. For some people, this phenomena is a chastisement from God, castigation upon the greediness of humanity, or any other kinds of condemnation. Nevertheless, this small and modest book distinguishes opportunity for evolution that lies behind the misery.

Suffering is indeed frightening for most people, yet this book unveils that sorrow does own other quality than fear for it might become vitamin for the growing of a soul, chance to compensate karmic debts, splendid meditation materials, and vigor that leads to wisdom.

Moreover, suffering might as well provide strong roots for the forthcoming happiness. Above all, those step beyond suffering and happiness shall behold an opening gate of life that is blissfulness, enlightenment and ultimate healing.

Nature as a symbol of enlightenment and ultimate healing keeps whispering: 'nature has far longer age than human being because it welcomes all seasons'. Those who deeply embodying this in life might have a boundless capacity to suffer, and able to see that life and death are one.

Since his early days of childhood in Tajun village Northern Bali Indonesia, Gede Prama admires and communes with nature. Later, he took nature into his inner side and regards it as his counselor of life. It is from his deep friendship with nature, Gede gained a lot of insights. Even though he happened to be developed in the world of corporation (used to be a CEO in a huge company), educated in the west (attended top management course at INSEAD France, and hold a master degree from Lancaster University England), have produced 25 books (most of them are national best sellers in Indonesia), he keeps writing and inspiring countless lives. It is like a

complete circle of Mandala, Gede Prama's life has to return to the initial point where he began to converses with nature in his birth place, Tajun village. In this present time Gede Prama is living in Tajun village and working in Jakarta Indonesia.